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[For information on the gender classification of terms for various phenomena of the external world and the human organism, see Category 193, pp. 18-21.]

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[For Blackfoot terms designating phenomena concerning the external world and the human organism, and for Blackfoot terms designating tribes, bands, and other sociopolitical units, see Category 192.]

5: Grinnell Q,T-5 (ca.1888) 1962
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539 Far the home of my people, and my strength is gone. Surely here I must die, for I cannot travel and I have no food."

"Now courage, my brother," said the bear. "Now not faint heart, my brother, for I will help you, and you shall survive."

When he had said this, he lifted Mik-a'pi and carried him to a place of thick mud; and here he took great handfuls[1] of the mud and plastered the wounds, and he sung a medicine song while putting on the mud. Then he carried Mik-a'pi to a place where were many sarvis berries, and broke off great branches of the fruit, and gave them to him, saying, "Eat, my brother, eat!" and he broke off more branches, full of large ripe berries, for him; but already Mik-a'pi was satisfied and could eat no more. Then said the bear, "Lie down, now, on my back, and hold tight by my hair, and we will travel on." And when Mik-a'pi had got on and was ready, he started off on a long swinging trot.

All through the night he travelled on without stopping. When morning came, they rested awhile, and ate more berries; and again the bear plastered his wounds with mud. In this way they travelled on, until, on the fourth day, they came close to the lodges of the Pikŭn'i; and the people saw them coming and wondered.

"Get off, my brother, get off," said the bear. "There are your people. I must leave you." And without another word, he turned and went off up the mountain.

All the people came out to meet the warrior, and they carried him to the lodge of his father. He untied the three scalps from his belt and gave them to the widows, saying: "You are revenged. I wipe away your tears." And every one rejoiced. All his female relations went through the camp, shouting his name and singing, and every one prepared for the scalp dance.

[825] [1] The bear's paws are called *O-kits-iks*, the term also for a person's hands. The animal itself is regarded as almost human.

5: Grinnell Q,T-5 (ca.1888) 1962
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THE FAST RUNNERS

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ONCE, long ago, the antelope and the deer met on the prairie. At this time both of them had galls and both dew claws. They began to talk together, and each was telling the other what he could do. Each one told how fast he could run, and before long they were disputing as to which could run the faster. Neither would allow that the other could beat him, so they agreed that they would have a race to decide which was the swifter, and they bet their galls on the race. When they ran, the antelope proved the faster runner, and beat the deer and took his gall.

Then the deer said: "Yes, you have beaten me on the prairie, but that is not where I live. I only go out there sometimes to feed, or when I am travelling around. We ought to have another race in the timber. That is my home, and there I can run faster than you can."

The antelope felt very big because he had beaten the deer in the race, and he thought wherever they might be, he could run faster than the deer. So he agreed to race in the timber, and on this race they bet their dew claws.

They ran through the thick timber, among the brush and over fallen logs, and this time the antelope ran slowly, because he was not used to this kind of travelling, and the deer easily beat him, and took his dew claws.

Since then the deer has had no gall, and the antelope no dew claws.

[NOTE. A version of the first portion of this story is current among the Pawnees, and has been printed in Pawnee Hero Stories and Folk Tales.]

[171]

5: Grinnell Q,T-5 (ca.1888) 1962
NF6 Blackfoot NF6

539 "What do you say?" cried Old Man. The frog repeated what he had said.

"Ah!" exclaimed Old Man, "tell me all about it."

"The Chief Bear and his brothers," replied the frog, "were playing on the sand, when Old Man shot arrows into them. They are not dead, but the arrows are very near their hearts; if you should shove ever so little on them, the points would cut their hearts. I am going after medicine now to cure them."

Then Old Man killed the frog and skinned her, and put the hide on himself and swam back to the island, and hopped up toward the bears, crying at every step, "*Nī'-nah O-kyaī'-yu!*" just as the frog had done.

"Hurry," cried the Chief Bear.

"Yes," replied Old Man, and he went up and shoved the arrow into his heart.

"I cured him; he is asleep now," he cried, and he went up and shoved the arrow into the biggest brother's heart. "I cured them; they are asleep now"; and he went up and shoved the arrow into the other bear's heart. Then he built a big fire and skinned the bears, and tried out the fat and poured it into a hollow in the ground; and he called all the animals to come and roll in it, that they might be fat. And all the [825] animals came and rolled in it. The bears came first and rolled in it, that is the reason they get so fat. Last of all came the rabbits, and the grease was almost all gone; but they filled their paws with it and rubbed it on their backs and between their hind legs. That is the reason why rabbits have two such large layers of fat on their backs, and that is what makes them so fat between the hind legs.

[NOTE.—The four preceding stories show the serious side of Old Man's character. Those which follow represent him as malicious, foolish, and impotent.]

5: Grinnell Q,T-5 (ca.1888) 1962
NF6 Blackfoot NF6

539 the rabbits were cooked, he cut some red willow brush and
[824] laid them on it to cool. The grease soaked into these
branches, so, even to-day if you hold red willow over a fire,
[825] you will see the grease on the bark. You can see, too, that ever since, the rabbits have a burnt place on their backs, where the one that got away was singed.

Old Man sat down, and was waiting for the rabbits to cool a little, when a coyote came along, limping very badly. "Pity me, Old Man," he said, "you have lots of cooked rabbits; give me one of them."

"Go away," exclaimed Old Man. "If you are too lazy to catch your food, I will not help you."

"My leg is broken," said the coyote. "I can't catch anything, and I am starving. Just give me half a rabbit."

"I don't care if you die," replied Old Man. "I worked hard to cook all these rabbits, and I will not give any away. But I will tell you what we will do. We will run a race to that butte, way out there, and if you beat me you can have a rabbit."

"All right," said the coyote. So they started. Old Man ran very fast, and the coyote limped along behind, but close to him, until they got near to the butte. Then the coyote turned round and ran back very fast, for he was not lame at all. It took Old Man a long time to go back, and just before he got to the fire, the coyote swallowed the last rabbit, and trotted off over the prairie.

5: Grinnell Q,T-5 (ca.1888) 1962
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make a bag of one hundred pounds; a very large bull might make a sack of from eighty to one hundred pounds.

A much finer grade of pemmican was made from the choicest parts of the buffalo with marrow fat. To this dried berries and pounded choke-cherries were added, making a delicious food, which was extremely nutritious. Pemmican was eaten either dry as it came from the sack, or stewed with water.

In the spring, the people had great feasts of the eggs of ducks and other water-fowl. A large quantity having been gathered, a hole was dug in the ground, and a little water put in it. At short intervals above the water, platforms of sticks were built, on which the eggs were laid. A smaller hole was dug at one side of the large hole, slanting into the bottom of it. When all was ready, the top of the larger hole was covered with mud, laid upon cross sticks, and red-hot stones were dropped into the slant, when they rolled down into the water, heating it, and so cooking the eggs by steam.

Fish were seldom eaten by these people in early days, but now they seem very fond of them. Turtles, frogs, and lizards are considered creatures of evil, and are never eaten. Dogs, considered a great delicacy by the Crees, Gros Ventres, Sioux, Assinaboines, and other surrounding tribes, were never eaten by the Blackfeet. No religious motive is assigned for this abstinence. I once heard a Piegan say that it was wrong to eat dogs. "They are our true friends," he said. "Men say they are our friends and then turn against us, but our dogs are always true. They mourn when we are absent, and are always glad when we return. They keep watch for us in the night when we sleep. So pity the poor dogs."

Snakes, grasshoppers, worms, and other insects were never eaten. Salt was an unknown condiment. Many are now very fond of it, but I know a number, especially old people, who never eat it.

5: Grinnell Q,T-5 (ca.1888) 1962
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that expressed in the foregoing quotation. The statement that Old Man was merely light personified would be beyond his comprehension, and if he did understand what was meant, he would laugh at it, and aver that *Na'pi* was a real man, a flesh and blood person like himself. 776

The character of Old Man, as depicted in the stories told of him by the Blackfeet, is a curious mixture of opposite attributes. In the serious tales, such as those of the creation, he is spoken of respectfully, and there is no hint of the impish qualities which characterize him in other stories, in which he is powerful, but also at times impotent; full of all wisdom, yet at times so helpless that he has to ask aid from the animals. Sometimes he sympathizes with the people, and at others, out of pure spitefulness, he plays them malicious tricks that are worthy of a demon. He is a combination of strength, weakness, wisdom, folly, childishness, and malice. 776 538

Under various names Old Man is known to the Crees, Chippeways, and other Algonquins, and many of the stories that are current among the Blackfeet are told of him among those tribes. The more southern of these tribes do not venerate him as of old, but the Plains and Timber Crees of the north, and the north Chippeways, are said still to be firm believers in Old Man. He was their Creator, and is still their chief god. He is believed in less by the younger generation than the older. The Crees are regarded by the Indians of the Northwest as having very powerful medicine, and this all comes from Old Man. 776 171

Old Man can never die. Long ago he left the Blackfeet and went away to the West, disappearing in the mountains. Before his departure he told them that he would always take care of them, and some day would return. Even now, many of the old people believe that he spoke the truth, and that some day he will come back, and will bring with him the buffalo, which they believe the white men have 776 [825]

5: Grinnell Q,T-5 (ca.1888) 1962
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776 hidden. It is sometimes said, however, that when he left
●[825] them he told them also that, when he returned, he would find them changed — a different people and living in a different way from that which they practised when he went away. Sometimes, also, it is said that when he disappeared he went to the East.

776 It is generally believed that Old Man is no longer the
178 principal god of the Blackfeet, that the Sun has taken his place. There is some reason to suspect, however, that the Sun and Old Man are one, that *Nātōs'* is only another name for *Na'pi*, for I have been told by two or three old men that "the Sun is the person whom we call Old Man." However this may be, it is certain that *Na'pi* — even if he no longer occupies the chief place in the Blackfoot religious system — is still reverenced, and is still addressed in prayer. Now, however, every good thing, success in war, in the chase, health, long life, all happiness, come by the special favor of the Sun.

776 The Sun is a man, the supreme chief of the world. The
821 flat, circular earth in fact is his home, the floor of his lodge, and the over-arching sky is its covering. The moon, *Kō-kō-mik'-ē-ĭs*, night light, is the Sun's wife. The pair have had a number of children, all but one of whom were killed by pelicans. The survivor is the morning star, *A-pi-su'-ahts* — early riser.

776 In attributes the Sun is very unlike Old Man. He is a
782 beneficent person, of great wisdom and kindness, good to those who do right. As a special means of obtaining his favor, sacrifices must be made. These are often presents of clothing, fine robes, or furs, and in extreme cases, when the prayer is for life itself, the offering of a finger, or — still dearer — a lock of hair. If a white buffalo was killed, the
[778] robe was always given to the Sun. It belonged to him. Of the buffalo, the tongue — regarded as the greatest delicacy of the whole animal — was especially sacred to the Sun.

5: Grinnell Q,T-5 (ca.1888) 1962
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776 The
[171] Cheyennes also have a Ground Man whom they call The Lower One, or Below Person (*Pun'-ŏ-tsĭ-hyo*). The cold and snow are brought by Cold Maker (*Aĭ'-so-yim-stan*). He is a man, white in color, with white hair, and clad in white apparel, who rides on a white horse. He brings the storm with him. They pray to him to bring, or not to bring, the storm.

825 Many of the animals are regarded as typifying some form
778 of wisdom or craft. They are not gods, yet they have power, which, perhaps, is given them by the Sun or by Old Man. Examples of this are shown in some of the stories.

Among the animals especially respected and supposed to have great power, are the buffalo, the bear, the raven, the wolf, the beaver, and the kit-fox. Geese too, are credited with great wisdom and with foreknowledge of the weather. They are led by chiefs. As is quite natural among a people like the Blackfeet, the buffalo stood very high among the animals which they reverenced. It symbolized
[776] food and shelter, and was *Nato'yĕ* (of the Sun), sacred. Not a few considered it a medicine animal, and had it for their dream, or secret helper. It was the most powerful of all the animal helpers. Its importance is indicated by the fact that buffalo skulls were placed on the sweat houses built in connection with the Medicine Lodge. A similar respect for the buffalo exists among many Plains tribes, which were formerly dependent on it for food and raiment. A reverence for the bear appears to be common to all North American tribes, and is based not upon anything that the animal's body yields, but perhaps on the fact that it is the largest carnivorous mammal of the continent, the most difficult to kill and extremely keen in all its senses. The Blackfeet believe it to be part brute and part human, portions of its body, particularly the ribs and feet, being like those of a man. The raven is cunning. The wolf has great endurance and much craft. He can steal close to one without being seen. In the stories

5: Grinnell Q,T-5 (ca.1888) 1962
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given in the earlier pages of this book, many of the attributes of the different animals are clearly set forth. 825 778

There were various powers and signs connected with these animals so held in high esteem by the Blackfeet, to which the people gave strict heed. Thus the raven has the power of giving people far sight. It was also useful in another way. Often, in going to war, a man would get a raven's skin and stuff the head and neck, and tie it to the hair of the head behind. If a man wearing such a skin got near the enemy without knowing it, the skin would give him warning by tapping him on the back of the head with its bill. Then he would know that the enemy was near, and would hide. If a raven flew over a lodge, or a number of lodges, and cried, and then was joined by other ravens, all flying over the camp and crying, it was a sure sign that during the day some one would come and tell the news from far off. The ravens often told the people that game was near, calling to the hunter and then flying a little way, and then coming back, and again calling and flying toward the game. 825 787 778

The wolves are the people's great friends; they travel with the wolves. If, as they are travelling along, they pass close to some wolves, these will bark at the people, talking to them. Some man will call to them, "No, I will not give you my body to eat, but I will give you the body of some one else, if you will go along with us." This applies both to wolves and coyotes. If a man goes away from the camp at night, and meets a coyote, and it barks at him, he goes back to the camp, and says to the people: "Look out now; be smart. A coyote barked at me to-night." Then the people look out, and are careful, for it is a sure sign that something bad is going to happen. Perhaps some one will be shot; perhaps the enemy will charge the camp.

If a person is hungry and sings a wolf song, he is likely to find food. Men going on a hunting trip sing these songs, which bring them good luck. 789 533 825 778

825 778 The bear has very powerful medicine. Sometimes he takes pity on people and helps them, as in the story of Mik'-api.A

821 789 [533] Some Piegans, if they wish to travel on a certain day, have the power of insuring good weather on that day. It is supposed that they do this by singing a powerful song. Some of the enemy can cause bad weather, when they want to steal into the camp.

People who belonged to the *Sin'-o-pah* band of the *I-kun-uh'-kah-tsi*, if they were at war in summer and wanted a storm to come up, would take some dirt and water and rub it on the kit-fox skin, and this would cause a rain-storm to come up. In winter, snow and dirt would be rubbed on the skin and this would bring up a snow-storm.

778 782 823 [115] [776] Certain places and inanimate objects are also greatly reverenced by the Blackfeet, and presents are made to them. The smallest of the three buttes of the Sweet Grass Hills is regarded as sacred. "All the Indians are afraid to go there," Four Bears once told me. Presents are sometimes thrown into the Missouri River, though these are not offerings made directly to the stream, but are given to the Under Water People, who live in it.

Mention has already been made of the buffalo rock, which gives its owner the power to call the buffalo.

Another sacred object is the medicine rock of the Marias. It is a huge boulder of reddish sandstone, two-thirds the way up a steep hill on the north bank of the Marias River, about five miles from Fort Conrad. Formerly, this rock rested on the top of the bluff, but, as the soil about it is worn away by the wind and the rain, it is slowly moving down the hill. The Indians believe it to be alive, and make presents to it. When I first visited it, the ground about it was strewn with decaying remnants of offerings that had been made to it in the past. Among these I noticed, besides fragments of clothing, eagle feathers, a steel finger

A. [See Category 116, pp. 61-69--Analyst]

5: Grinnell Q,T-5 (ca.1888) 1962
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seen in the story of E-kūs'-kini, p. 90. Owls are thought to be the ghosts of medicine men. 775 [825]

The Blackfeet do not consider the Sand Hills a happy hunting ground. There the dead, who are themselves shadows, live in shadow lodges, hunt shadow buffalo, go to war against shadow enemies, and in every way lead an existence which is but a mimicry of this life. In this respect the Blackfeet are almost alone. I know of scarcely any other American tribe, certainly none east of the Rocky Mountains, who are wholly without a belief in a happy future state. The Blackfeet do not especially say that this future life is an unhappy one, but, from the way in which they speak of it, it is clear that for them it promises nothing desirable. It is a monotonous, never ending, and altogether unsatisfying existence, — a life as barren and desolate as the country which the ghosts inhabit. These people are as much attached to life as we are. Notwithstanding the unhappy days which have befallen them of late years, — days of privation and hunger, — they cling to life. Yet they seem to have no fear of death. When their time comes, they accept their fate without a murmur, and tranquilly, quietly pass away. [171] [157] [761]

753 consumption, hemorrhages, and diseases of the digestive
[775] organs. Mice, frogs, snakes, and tailed batrachians are said
[825] to cause much disease among women, and hence should be shunned, and on no account handled.

752 Less important external ailments and hurts, such as ulcers,
757 boils, sprains, and so on, are treated by applying various lotions or poultices, compounded by boiling or macerating certain roots or herbs, known only to the person supplying them. Rheumatic pains are treated in several ways. Sometimes the sweat lodge is used, or hot rocks are applied over the place where the pain is most severe, or actual cautery is practised, by inserting prickly pear thorns in the flesh, and setting fire to them, when they burn to the very point.

755 The sweat lodge, so often referred to, is used as a
757 curative agent, as well as in religious ceremonies, and is
343 considered very beneficial in illness of all kinds. The
354 sweat lodge is built in the shape of a rough hemisphere, three or four feet high and six or eight in diameter. The frame is usually of willow branches, and is covered with cowskins and robes. In the centre of the floor, a small hole is dug out, in which are to be placed red hot stones. Everything being ready, those who are to take the sweat remove their clothing and crowd into the lodge. The hot rocks are then handed in from the fire outside, and the cowskins pulled down to the ground to exclude any cold air.
[782] If a medicine pipe man is not at hand, the oldest person
[887] present begins to pray to the Sun, and at the same time sprinkles water on the hot rocks, and a dense steam rises, making the perspiration fairly drip from the body. Occasionally, if the heat becomes too intense, the covering is
755 raised for a few minutes to admit a little air. The sweat
757 bath lasts for a long time, often an hour or more, during
[782] which many prayers are offered, religious songs chanted, and several pipes smoked to the Sun. As has been said, the
[772] sweat lodge is built to represent the Sun's own lodge or

6: McFee E-4,5 (1959-1967) 1972 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

following the destruction of the buffalo to study and record aspects of the classic Blackfeet culture. The following description is based upon their published works and upon the writings of Ewers who has extended and synthesized much of the earlier work (these sources are included among the Recommended Readings).[6]

By 1850, then, the Piegan ranged within a portion of the territory, roughly 27,500 square miles in extent, assigned to them a few years later by the treaty of 1855 (Fig. 2)—a hunting territory bounded on the west by the Rocky Mountains, on the north by the U.S.-Canadian border, on the south by the Musselshell River and on the east by an undetermined line at about 109.5 longitude which included the Sweetgrass Hills and the Bearpaw Mountains (Ewers 1958:122–123; Kappler 1903:553). The topography and climate was generally similar to that of the present reservation.

Economy

For the Blackfeet of prereservation days the buffalo was the major source of food, shelter, clothing, tools, and ornamentation. Ewers (1955:149–152) has given the most complete review of the many uses of the animal indicating that most all fleshy parts were eaten, sometimes raw, most frequently cooked, during the times of the year that buffalo could be hunted. Meat was dried and stored, sometimes mixed and pounded with fat and dried berries to make pemmican, both effective ways of preservation for use during the winter months when hunting was difficult. In addition, Ewers lists eighty-seven nonfood uses of the buffalo including the manufacture of tepee covers, bedding, shields, some articles of clothing, containers, straps and thongs from the hides, cups, ladles and spoons from the horns, tools of bone, fuel from dung, ornaments from hair, hide and horn and so on down to using the tail attached to a stick for a fly brush. In the trading days, too, the meat and hides of the buffalo could be used to gain guns, ammunition, utensils, knives, axes, blankets, coffee, tea, tobacco, whiskey, and clothing from the white traders. Roots, berries, elk, deer, rabbits, fish, eggs of ducks and geese and occasionally the birds themselves were used as food, and their hides, horn, antlers, bone, feathers, along with grasses, willows, and so forth, supplemented these nonfood products of the buffalo. It seems fair to say that the buffalo was the bulwark of the Blackfeet economy and, as will be shown later, much if not most of the culture—other practices, beliefs, even the values by which people were measured—were expressions of a way of life built on hunting buffalo.

The horse had assumed great importance in Blackfeet life since its intro-

[6] Grinnell studied the Blackfeet during the years between 1885 and 1907. McClintock first visited the reservation in 1896 and subsequently spent many summers living and studying among the Indians until 1910. Curtis was a frequent visitor between 1898 and 1910, while Uhlenbeck and DeJong conducted linguistic and folklore research in the Heart Butte and Two Medicine regions in 1911 and 1912. Wissler, with the help of D. C. Duvall, did fieldwork during the decade from 1903 to 1913. As curator of the Museum of the Plains Indian, Ewers lived in Browning from 1941 to 1944 and returned for fieldwork again during 1947. Through his own fieldwork and extensive study of ethnological and ethnohistorical sources, he has been able to extend, synthesize and reinterpret what is known of this culture.

8: Ewers E,G-4,5 (1941-1951) 1971 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

the enemy to expose their bodies while shooting their arrows, the gunners fired with deadly aim, killing or wounding a Shoshoni with every shot. The Shoshonis, terrified by the report and the fatal magic of the new weapons, were thrown into a panic. Many of them broke and ran. The few stouthearted warriors who dared to stand their ground were overwhelmed in the Piegan charge. In their excitement over the success of this new weapon and their eagerness to take the scalps of some fifty fallen Shoshonis and to capture enemy weapons and war clothes abandoned on the field, the Piegans failed to follow up their advantage.[3]

Soon thereafter, while hunting buffalo on the frontier of the Shoshoni country, the Piegans encountered a lone mounted enemy. Although the rider got away, they managed to kill his his horse with an arrow shot into his belly. The Piegans and their allies crowded around the fallen animal in admiration and wonder. It reminded them of a stag that had lost its horns. But as it was a slave to man, like the dog which carried their belongings, they named it "Big Dog."[4] Later the Blackfeet renamed this animal "ponokamita," meaning "elk dog," in recognition of its size and its usefulness.[5]

Fearful of their enemies' new weapons the Shoshonis retreated southwestward, and the Piegans took over the Red Deer Valley. The experience gained in their recent battles with the Shoshonis taught the Blackfoot tribes two important lessons. To gain the mobility of the Shoshonis, they needed horses too. To obtain the deadly firepower of the Crees and Assiniboins, they needed guns. Shortly thereafter they must have begun to acquire both.

The source of the first horses acquired by the Blackfeet is still something of a mystery. Of course, they might have captured them from the Shoshonis, but it seems very improbable that a people unfamiliar with the riding or handling of these

[3] *Ibid.*, 330-32.

[4] *Ibid.*, 334.

[5] Edward Umfreville, *Present State of Hudson's Bay*, 202. He gives the name for horses as "Pin-ne-cho-me-tar," indicating that the change in the native name for this animal took place prior to Umfreville's time (1790).

8: Ewers E,G-4,5 (1941-1951) 1971 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

as a token of friendship. The traders replied by raising a flag and firing a few guns. On entering the trading house, the Indians were disarmed, formally seated on the floor in order of rank, and served a few drams of rum and some tobacco. Pipes were lighted and slowly passed around while the news was told at great length. When the women had erected the Indians' lodges near the fort, the traders gave out enough rum to permit the whole camp to enjoy a prolonged drinking spree. Not until the Indians sobered up, perhaps the next morning, perhaps a full day later, did they bring their goods into the fort to begin the trade.[24]

If the traders anticipated a rich harvest of beaver in the Blackfoot trade, they were soon disillusioned. There were plenty of beaver in the creeks and rivers. A good hunter could have killed a hundred of them a month with his bow and arrows. But, with the exception of one small band of Piegans who lived near the mountains and may not have owned many horses with which to hunt buffalo on the plains, the Blackfeet were generally not beaver hunters. To some the beaver was a sacred animal. Others found alibis for not hunting beaver, such as "the ground was too hard for their hands to work in."[25] Their trade in small-animal pelts consisted primarily of wolves and foxes, which they caught in snares or deep pits. The animals jumped into the pits to get the buffalo meat bait left by the Indians and could not get out again.

On the other hand, the Blackfeet loved to hunt buffalo on horseback, and could kill many more of these animals than they needed for their subsistence during their fall hunts. They offered quantities of fresh meat, dried meat, and pemmican to the traders. Consequently, the Blackfoot trade became primarily a source of provisions for the fur traders who could use this food while they were engaged in their more lucrative quest for beaver among the Indians north of the Saskatchewan.

The Blackfoot tribes also supplied horses to the traders cheap-

[24] This ritual was enacted at Fort George in 1794 and at Rocky Mountain House sixteen years later in much the same way. Duncan M'Gillivray, *The Journal of Duncan M'Gillivray of the Northwest Company at Fort George on the Saskatchewan, 1794-1795*, 30; Henry and Thompson, *New Light*, II, 728-31.

[25] Henry and Thompson, *New Light*, II, 724.

8: Ewers E,G-4,5 (1941-1951) 1971 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

[ca. 1850]

THE STAFF OF LIFE

A century ago Alfred Vaughan aptly termed the buffalo the Blackfoot Indians' "staff of life."[2] Surely the great number and variety of uses for that animal justified that characterization.

Buffalo supplied a tasty, easily digested, nourishing, year-round food for Indians of all ages. Blackfoot mothers gave their infants choice pieces of meat to suck. Toothless old people sucked the juices in the same way. Many Indians preferred the tongue and ribs. A soup made from buffalo fat and berries mixed with buffalo blood was a favorite dessert at Blackfoot feasts. Several parts of the animal were devoured during butchering, without benefit of cookery. On a buffalo hunt near Fort Union in the summer of 1843 the famous naturalist John James Audubon was appalled when the handsome, refined Blood Indian wife of Alexander Culbertson requested that the skull of a fallen beast be broken open so that she could eat its brains.[3] She was just following the custom of her people, who also enjoyed raw buffalo liver, kidneys, soft nose gristle, and marrow from the leg bones. Older men ate the raw testicles with relish, claiming this food made them healthy and virile. The cheeselike contents of the intestines of newborn calves killed in the spring was a delicacy to the aged of both sexes.

Fresh buffalo meat was cooked by roasting or boiling. Ribs usually were roasted on coals or on wooden spits. A dish known as Crow-guts was prepared by cleaning a section of the small intestine, turning it fat side in and stuffing it with a long, thin strip of meat, then roasting it. The intestine of a large buffalo cow or bull was cleaned, one end tied, filled with blood, and the other end tied. After it was boiled in water, pieces were cut off like sausage. Marrow fat was boiled. When the water cooled and the fat rose to the surface, it was skimmed off and stored in buffalo-skin sacks.

When meat was plentiful, large quantities of the lean flesh were cut into long, thin strips and dried in the sun on racks of poles. The dried meat was packed in buffalo rawhide envelopes

[2] Reports of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1858, 435.
[3] Maria Audubon (ed.), *Audubon and his Journals*, II, 111.

8: Ewers E,G-4,5 (1941-1951) 1971 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

were shot with guns or arrows. Men would lie in wait for mountain goats to pass along their well-marked trails. The hides of bighorn and antelope were prized for making fine dress clothing. Both bighorn and mountain goat horns were made into spoons and ladles. Elkhorns were used for war clubs, whip handles, and bows and cantles of pack saddles.

Adventurous young men hunted the powerful grizzly bear for its claws, which they proudly displayed in the form of necklaces. However, most Blackfoot Indians feared and avoided this dangerous beast. They regarded it as a sacred animal of great supernatural as well as physical power.

The smaller fur-bearing animals were caught in traps and deadfalls during the winter months when their furs were prime. As early as 1833 the American Fur Company was lending steel beaver traps to the Piegans to encourage them to trap these animals.[6] Mink, muskrat, and otter also were trapped. Wolves and foxes were caught in baited pits or deadfalls. The clever weasel, whose white winter skin was in demand for decorating headdresses and men's dress suits, was taken in an ingenious series of sinew snares arranged inside a cylindrical wooden frame. One end of the cylinder was placed over the weasel hole. When the curious animal poked his head out of the hole to see what was there it was caught in the snares.

The most highly prized bird of the Blackfoot country was the golden eagle. The striking black-tipped feathers of this bird were used for making bonnets and for decorating shields. Eagle catching was a dangerous feat performed only by men who claimed to possess secret power. On the top of a hill a warrior dug a pit about four feet deep, large enough for him to hide in. He roofed the pit with poles, twigs, and grass. After he placed a large piece of meat or a dead rabbit or other small mammal on the roof for bait, he entered the pit and rearranged the cover to conceal himself from view. There he waited until an eagle swooped down to take the meat. Then he quickly reached through a crevice in the roof, grasped the eagle by both feet, pulled it into the pit, and wrung its neck.

[6] Maximilian, *Travels*, II, 162.

8: Ewers E,G-4,5 (1941-1951) 1971 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

sins. Women and girls wore the same kind of moccasins, mittens, and headgear. Trade blankets or buffalo robes covered their undecorated dresses. 291 221

The Indians obtained their drinking water from holes chopped in the river ice. At these water holes the horses were watered three times daily. The horses were left to rustle for their food by pawing away the snow to the grass below. Some men fed their best horses the inner bark of cottonwood, which the Indians considered "better than oats." Others employed this supplemental feed only when the snow was too deep for the horses to rustle their own food. In some winters deep snows combined with very cold weather killed off many horses. In spite of everything their owners could do for them, the animals froze to death. 312 221 231 221

Throughout the winter beaver bundle owners kept primitive calendars of notched sticks, one notch representing each day, by which they could predict the approach of spring. The band chief carefully examined the development of embryos taken from buffalo cows killed in late winter hunts. When he saw that the unborn calves were beginning to develop hair, he knew spring was near. Before the river ice broke up, the beaver men held their ceremonies. When geese were seen flying north, all knew it was time to leave their winter camp. This was usually in late March or early April. After five or more months in one location the people were restless. They were glad to roam the plains again. 805 221 821 825 221 [796] 221 [825]

March was a difficult month during which the buffalo began to drift away from the sheltered river valleys. Unless the bands packed and followed the buffalo, they would have to subsist on small game or go hungry. Each band went its separate way in pursuit of buffalo. Buffalo calves were born in spring, between the breakup of winter camp and the annual May storm, a sudden and in some years heavy fall of snow which melted and disappeared almost over night. The Indians killed calves for children's robes and soft skin sacks. The medicine pipe ceremony was performed after the first thunder was heard in spring, usually in April or May. Spring was also the season for making willow back- [621] [231] [796]

8: Ewers E,G-4,5 (1941-1951) 1971 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

Blackfoot camps. "When ten or twelve tents were together, we were sure to see six or seven women mutilated in this manner."[7] However, this severe punishment for infidelity was discontinued by the middle 1870's.[8]

Stormy as their marital lives sometimes were, Blackfoot Indians were fond and indulgent parents. Large families were common. Some men claimed to have fathered more than a score of children by their several wives. The pregnant woman wore a broad, adjustable rawhide belt as her time approached. It supported and protected her when she rode horseback or engaged in active work. Sometimes an expectant mother's labor pains came while she was riding with a moving camp. She dropped out of the line of march and two or three hours later returned to the caravan with her newborn babe in her arms. Usually, however, the birth took place in a tipi. An elderly woman, experienced in midwifery, gave the mother a decoction of roots to drink to ease her pains and facilitate delivery. While the mother grasped one of the lodge poles and an assistant held her around the waist the midwife attended to the delivery, then laced the mother in her rawhide belt. Sometimes the mother resumed her household chores the next day.

A portion of the baby's navel cord was cut, dried, and preserved in a beaded buckskin case as the child's primitive health insurance. The cases for boys' navel cords were in the form of snakes; girls' were lizard-shaped. The Blackfeet believed that snakes and lizards were never sick and lived long lives. The child was bathed and wrapped in soft skin. Moss or a soft punk served in lieu of diapers.

A few days after the birth the father called upon some distinguished member of his band to name the child. The name was carefully chosen because it was believed to have an important influence on the child's life. Sometimes it was the name of a respected ancestor; at other times it commemorated a brave or generous act of the bestower or of the child's father. Lazy

[7] *Travels*, II, 110, 117, 136.
[8] Bradley, "Manuscript," *MHSC*, Vol. IX, 271.

9: Ewers E,G-4,5 (1941-1951) 1955 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

and his marriage the Snakes had made use of a few horses in battle with the Piegan, "on which they dashed at the Peeagans, and with their stone Pukamoggin knocked them on the head." After his marriage he again went to the aid of the Piegan. Another battle was fought with the Snakes, but this time the enemy used no horses while the Piegan and their Cree and Assiniboin allies were armed with 10 guns. Terrified by the noise and deadly effects of this new secret weapon, the closely formed Snake battle line broke and its members fled in confusion.

Saukamaupee said that after that battle:

> We pitched away in large camps with the women and children on the frontier of the Snake Indian country, hunting bison and red deer which were numerous, and we were anxious to see a horse of which we had heard so much. At last, as the leaves were falling we heard that one was killed by an arrow shot into his belly, but the Snake Indian that rode him, got away; numbers of us went to see him, and we all admired him, he put us in mind of a stag that had lost his horns; and we did not know what name to give him. But as he was a slave to Man, like the dog, which carried our things, he was named the Big Dog. [Thompson, 1916, p. 334.]

In spite of the indefiniteness of the dating of the incidents of Saukamaupee's recollections, I see no adequate reason to doubt the facts he cited. Fragments of this story have been preserved in the traditions of the Blackfoot tribes to the present time.[3] However, I do question the conclusions that have been drawn from this account by historians and ethnologists as to the date of acquisition of horses by the Blackfoot tribes.

Although Saukamaupee's description of his first sight of a *dead* horse is clear enough, nowhere in his account does he tell of the first acquisition of *live* horses by the Blackfoot. Yet J. B. Tyrrell, editor of Thompson's "Narrative," draws from the dead horse episode the unwarranted conclusion that the Blackfoot obtained their first horses from the Snake Indians in 1730. Lewis (1942, pp. 11, 60) followed

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[3] Wissler (1910, p. 17) reported the Blackfoot tradition that before white men dominated the region the Shoshoni occupied much of the later Blackfoot country as far north as Two Medicine River. My informants of the 1940's claimed that the area of the present Blackfeet Reservation in Montana was formerly occupied by Shoshoni. Wissler (1912 a, p. 286) recorded the Piegan tradition that they received their first guns from the Cree, who taught them how to use them, and that "while some Piegan were out on the warpath they were attacked by a large number of Snake Indians. The Piegan fired on them and as they had never before seen guns they retreated." Weasel Tail, who seems to have possessed a strong interest in the historical traditions of his people, told me he understood that the Blackfoot obtained their first guns from the Cree; that the Cree joined them in a war party against the Shoshoni and Crow (?) in which the noise of the Blackfoot guns frightened the enemy so that they fled southward from their location at that time, which was near present Calgary, Alberta.

Weasel Tail volunteered that his grandfather, Talks Around, had told him the Blackfoot called the first horses they saw "big dogs." Later, because horses were about the size of elks, they began to call them "elk dogs." The change in name must have taken place before 1790, as Umfreville (1790, p. 202) recorded "Pis-se-cho-me-tar," as the name for the horse in the first published Blackfoot vocabulary. This was certainly an attempt to render "ponokomita" (elk dog), the name still given the horse by the Blackfoot tribes.

9: Ewers E,G-4,5 (1941-1951) 1955 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

encampment around which thousands of horses grazed. Yet informants said quarrels between owners due to inability to distinguish their respective horses were very rare.

The Blackfoot knew their horses by color, conformation, physical and action peculiarities. The wealthy Many Horses was said to have known every animal in his herd so well that he could describe a missing animal in detail to the young man he sent to search for it. Stingy, the wealthy blind man, was credited with the ability to identify many of his horses by the sound of their hoofbeats, and to know all of them by feel. Brings-Down-the-Sun, chief of the North Piegan, claimed his father could tell a horse's age by its whinny (McClintock, 1910, p. 422). These feats of recognition were exceptional. However, as a people who spent their lives in the company of horses, the Blackfoot were keenly aware of the individual peculiarities of these valuable possessions.

Owners of large herds named only those animals that were broken and in daily use in addition to a few good mares and stallions in their range herds maintained for breeding purposes. The name of each animal usually was selected to describe the horse's appearance, more rarely its peculiarities of action. As several informants recalled, "we named them by the looks of them."

Color names were most common. Common color names for horses recalled by the old people were:

White	Black	Buckskin	Sorrel
Gray	Black Pinto	Bay	Red Pinto
Mouse-colored	Blue	Dark Bay	Brown
Iron gray	Blue Roan	Roan	

Some Indians named their dun horses "Dusty." One old lady called her dark, reddish-brown horse "Burnt Bay." Localized color markings also suggested such names as "Bald Face," "Black Legs" and "Two-White-Legs." Peculiarities of size and shape gave rise to "No Mane," "Big Pinto," "Little-Gray-Horse," "Crow Foot," "Flop Ears," and "Split Ears." Other factors less commonly suggested names, such as "Gray-Horse-Crazy," "Sits Down," and "Orphan." It is not difficult to see that by employing a combination of descriptive terms, as was actually done (for example, "Black-Bald-Face" and "Bay-With-Star-on-Forehead"), it was possible to coin a great variety of names for horses. Men who owned race horses commonly called them either "Racer" or "Gambler."

When many Piegan were employed on the Blackfeet Reservation irrigation project in the early years of this century, they began to give their horses "white man names." Today the old color names are rarely heard on the Montana reservation. Even older fullbloods, who

9: Ewers E,G-4,5 (1941-1951) 1955 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

231 484 herds, had to move camp several times in the course of each winter for no other reason than to secure adequate pasturage. This did not necessarily entail movement of any great distance. A few miles, a short day's journey, might bring them to good pasturage.[15]

WINTER CARE

825 821 [361] The Blackfoot regarded certain actions of wild birds and animals as winter signs. If owls screamed at night, if geese flew high, if crows shifted their wings sideways in flight, or if the pelage of otter, mink, and beaver appeared heavier than usual, they knew a hard winter was approaching, and were careful to establish winter camps in the vicinity of extensive growths of cottonwood to gain protection from the cold and high winds and supplemental food for their horses.

231 [291] In winter cautious owners no longer delegated care of their horses to adolescent boys. They cared for the animals themselves. In the coldest weather men donned buffalohide caps with ear flaps, buffalo robes or Hudson's Bay blanket coats, hair-lined mittens, and moccasins when leaving their lodges to tend the horses. Although they did not watch their horses all day in winter, owners watered the animals thrice daily as they did in summer. A winter camp near a spring 312 that did not freeze was a choice location. If a spring was not handy, men chopped waterholes in the river ice near their lodges. Each man who used the waterhole broke open any new-formed ice so the hole would not freeze solid.[16]

RUSTLING

231 When there was snow on the ground the Blackfoot did not hobble their horses. Their front feet were left free to paw away the snow to the dry grass below. At this practice, commonly known as "rustling," Indian ponies were remarkably adept. Unless the snow was too deep to prevent them from raising their legs (i. e. over ca. 2 feet) they generally could rustle enough food in this way to gain a meager subsistence. Denny (1939, p. 53), recalled that the Canadian Northwest Mounted Police, during their first winter in Alberta, employed Indian ponies which "were hardy, serviceable animals, and would find their own food under the snow by pawing in the coldest weather." Later experience of that efficient force proved to them that eastern,

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[171] [15] My Kiowa informants also recalled that their winter camps had to be moved when the neighboring grass supply became inadequate for their horses. Dunbar (1880, p. 332) reported Pawnee winter camp movements due to exhaustion of grass for horses. Undoubtedly, this factor conditioned winter movements of all the nomadic Plains Indians and those horticultural tribes who spent the winter season on prolonged hunting excursions away from their more permanent villages.

[171] [16] The Cree practice of placing alkali earth around waterholes to keep horses from straying was not mentioned by Blackfoot informants (Mandelbaum, 1940, p. 196).

9: Ewers E,G-4,5 (1941-1951) 1955 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

White-Horses, so named because all the horses in his herd were whites or grays, traded any dark-colored horses he obtained for white ones. Nevertheless, his horses were said to have been of rather poor quality. They were small, tender-hoofed animals. When the Government furnished large stallions to Piegan owners, Many-White-Horses refused to accept them. He feared the stallions would injure his small mares. So he continued to raise large numbers of little horses. They had more prestige than practical value.

Joseph Sherburne recalled that when he traveled the Blackfeet Reservation (in the first decade of the 20th century) making collections for his father's store, some Indian owners of large herds still specialized in horses of a particular color or conformation. He learned to recognize the peculiarities of the horses of different owners so that he could tell from a distance the ownership of many range horses by their appearance. There were 10 or 12 owners on the Blackfeet Reservation in Montana at that time whose horses were readily distinguishable by their physical appearance. Mr. Sherburne said the uniformity of these herds was maintained both by selection of studs and by swapping of horses which failed to exhibit the desired characteristics.

MAGICAL BREEDING FORMULAS

Some Blackfoot horsemen placed faith in magical formulas for insuring the birth of colts exhibiting desired qualities. If a man wanted a pinto colt he killed a magpie and tied its black and white feathered body around the neck of his mare with a buckskin string in the fall of the year, saying, "Now, I want you to have a pinto colt next spring." The magpie was worn on the mare's neck until it fell off. One informant said, "When spring came that mare would surely have a pinto colt, and thereafter all her colts would be pintos."

No other color of horse was as popular with the old-time Blackfoot as was that of the pinto. Many men were proud to be seen riding a two-colored horse.[28]

In order to get "a big colt," the Piegan Stingy is said to have made a practice of roasting a "big turnip" (*Leptotaenia multifida*, carrot-leaf), slicing it with a knife, punching holes through the slices, stringing them on a buckskin cord, and tying the cord around a mare's neck. The odor of the big turnip kept the mare in fine condition all winter. In spring she would bear a "big colt." Stingy is said to have employed

[28] This is in contrast to the Kiowa tendency to consider pintos "women's horses" (communication from Alice Marriott). The Nez Percé (Ross, 1855, vol. 1, p. 307) preferred white and speckled (Appaloosa) horses, which they valued at two or three times the worth of other horses. Kroeber (1907, p. 424) reported Arapaho use of colored bean medicines to cause mares to produce colts of desired colors. Spotted beans produced pintos, red beans roans or bays, and white beans white or buckskin colts. My Kiowa informants had no knowledge of the use of magical breeding formulas by members of their tribe.

9: Ewers E,G-4,5 (1941-1951) 1955 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

THE HORSE IN CAMP MOVEMENTS

Many factors other than the possession of horses conditioned Blackfoot nomadism in historic times. These factors were geographic, climatic, and bionomic as well as cultural. Before considering in detail the functions of horses in camp movements let us survey briefly the influence of these other factors on the Blackfoot yearly round.

THE BLACKFOOT COUNTRY

At its largest extent, prior to the first Blackfoot treaty with the United States Government in 1855, the territory of the three Blackfoot tribes extended from the North Saskatchewan River in Canada southward to the present Yellowstone National Park. The Rocky Mountains formed its western boundary. The mouth of Milk River, some 300 miles eastward, marked its easternmost limit. (See map, fig. 24.)

Within this area lie the headwaters of both the Missouri and the Saskatchewan Rivers, comprising numerous swift-flowing streams. From the base of the Rockies the land slopes toward the east, dropping from an elevation of 4,366 feet at present Browning, near the mountains, to about 2,150 feet at the mouth of Milk River. Isolated uplifts east of the Rockies (the Sweetgrass Hills, Cypress Hills, Bearpaw Mountains, Little Rocky Mountains, Little Belt Mountains, and Big Belt Mountains) served as landmarks to the Indians and furnished timber, found elsewhere only in the stream valleys and on the slopes of the Rockies. Near the mountains the surface is more broken than Plains-like, yet there, as farther east, rich grasses afford excellent grazing for buffalo and horses.

Wild life abounded in this region. Great herds of buffalo blackened the Plains. Antelope, deer, elk, bighorn, bear (both black and grizzly), beaver, otter, mink, muskrat, wolves, foxes, badgers, weasels, and rabbits offered a variety of animal foods and materials for use in Indian handicrafts. Recently Schaeffer (1950, pp. 37–46) listed some 80 bird species (in some cases families) recognized by the Blackfoot as residents of their territory, including several species of game birds. Although fish were abundant in the streams and lakes, they were rarely eaten by the Blackfoot. Edible plant foods of primary importance to the Indians were the spring roots of the prairie turnip, bitterroot and camass, and the fall berries of the chokecherry, buf-

9: Ewers E,G-4,5 (1941-1951) 1955 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

third quarter of the 19th century. It also was the site of a winter trading post operated by Baker and Bro. of Fort Benton, licensed Indian traders in 1868–69 (Bradley, 1923, pp. 346–347).[171]

Bradley, on the basis of information furnished by Alexander Culbertson, stated that in earlier times (ca. 1833) the Piegan wintered on Sun and Teton Rivers and sometimes as far south as the Three Forks of the Missouri. At that time the Blood Indians wintered on the Marias or on Belly River, and the North Blackfoot on Belly and Bow Rivers (Bradley, MSS., Mont. Hist. Soc., book A, p. 179). There is no indication that the Piegan wintered as far south as the Three Forks after 1850.

When geese were seen flying north the Blackfoot knew it was time to leave their winter camps. Beaver bundle owners kept a sort of calendar on notched sticks, one notch representing each day, by means of which they could predict the day on which geese would be sighted in the spring. When the river ice broke up, and before leaving winter camp, the beaver ceremony was held. The approach of spring also was determined by the band chief through observation of the development of embryos taken from buffalo cows killed by hunters. When he noted that the unborn calves began to develop hair he knew spring was near and calves would soon drop. Breakup of the winter camp usually occurred in late March or early April, depending upon the severity of the winter. Thus the nomadic Blackfoot spent at least 5 months of the year in relatively fixed residences.

SPRING HUNTING AND COLLECTING SEASON

March was remembered by elderly Indians as a difficult month during which the buffalo began to drift eastward and northeastward away from the Indians' winter villages. The bands would be forced to subsist on smaller game or go hungry unless they packed and moved after the buffalo. Each band went its separate way in pursuit of buffalo. Buffalo calves generally were born in the period between the end of winter and the annual May storm. Numerous calves were killed for children's robes and soft skin bags. The medicine pipe ceremony, held on the occasion of the first thunder in spring, generally was observed in April or May. It was also the season for making willow back rests, construction and repair of riding gear, and fashioning of warm-weather clothing. During this season the

[171] "In October, 1859, Snowden's detached party of Raynolds' Expedition saw a locality on the South Fork of Cheyenne River, S. Dak., in the Teton Dakota country which was much used by Indians for winter camps because of its natural advantages: "A bottom enclosed and protected by hills, filled with large cottonwood, and young groves that would furnish sustenance to almost any number of horses; good grass covers the bottom and neighboring hills" (Raynolds, 1868, pp. 158–159).

9: Ewers E,G-4,5 (1941-1951) 1955 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

Weasel Tail said the Indians could distinguish between a dog's snorting at night (which the people termed "barking at spirits") and its barking at approaching strangers. The Blood Indians also knew that Cree raiders had a custom of signaling to each other by coyote howls on approaching their camps at night. He claimed clever Blood Indians could distinguish the imitation coyote howl from the real one.

Blackfoot reliance upon dogs for protection appears remarkable in view of the fact that their warriors were well aware of the ineffectiveness of dogs in enemy camps as obstacles to their own raids. Weasel Tail said that if the enemy dogs started barking when a Blackfoot horse-raiding party approached the camp, the raiders backtracked, circled the camp and approached from another direction after the dogs had quieted down. They threw bits of meat to the dogs to quiet them. He said he had never heard of any man of his tribe having been bitten by a dog while attempting to take horses from an enemy village.[21]

If young men had been out scouting for game during the day and found signs suggesting that an enemy war party might be near, the Blackfoot were more careful. Some band chiefs made a practice of sending out scouts in winter to look for enemy signs. They reported any suspicious signs observed to the chief, who announced them to the people. One or more of three precautionary measures could then be taken: (1) the setting of an individual lodge watch, (2) construction of a corral or corrals for horses, and (3) organization of an ambush.

THE INDIVIDUAL LODGE WATCH

This was a guard, organized on a family basis, usually employed if the danger of attack was felt to be relatively slight. The men and women of each lodge owning picketed horses took turns staying awake and listening for any unusual movement on the part of the horses picketed close by or any noise that might indicate the presence of the enemy. If any suspicious noise was heard the men of the lodge were roused and they rushed out guns in hand. This precaution was only effective in guarding the picketed horses and would not, of course, prevent the enemy from running off the range herds grazing at a distance. Yet enemies were killed as a result of these watches.

[21] My informants claimed that the camps of the enemy tribes from which they captured horses were normally no more closely guarded at night than were their own. Weasel Tail said the Crow habitually drove their horses a long distance from camp before dusk, which made it easy for a Blackfoot raiding party, watching from a hill or other secluded spot, to go directly to those horses after nightfall. The Omaha were reported (1819) to have used no "regular sentinels" at night (James, 1823, p. 293). Captain Bonneville, who, camped on the Plains with a large, combined village of Flathead, Nez Percé and Pend d'Oreille in the winter of 1832–33, was impressed by the lack of provision made by these tribes for night protection of their horses and the camp. "They merely drive them (horses) at nightfall to some sequestered dell, and leave them there, at perfect liberty, until morning . . . Even in situations of danger, the Indians rarely set guards over their camp at night, intrusting that office entirely to their vigilant and well-trained dogs" (Irving, 1851, p. 119).

9: Ewers E,G-4,5 (1941-1951) 1955 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

horses by laymen. One of these was the root of *Townsendia excapa*, which laymen boiled and poured into the mouths or noses of tired horses to revive them. He believed a root similar to baneberry, and known to the Blackfoot as "strong root," which laymen smashed and fed to horses at any time of year to make them hardy, was another horse medicine ingredient. He claimed (and as we have seen above, correctly) that the root of the baneberry, frequently found in medicine pipe bundles, was one of the secret horse medicines.

Other informants who did not possess horse medicine power, but who had carefully observed the grazing habits of horses, made conjectures as to the identification of some horse medicines. Three Calf understood that the roots of a plant that grew around alkali lakes and of which horses were very fond (possibly the mat muhly, *Muhlenbergia squarrosa*) (U. S. Forest Service, 1937) was a horse medicine ingredient. Weasel Tail thought a weed that grew on the Plains which horses often pawed up while grazing was ground to a powder and mixed with the ground heart and feet of a beaver to form a horse medicine. Another informant knew of a medicine used by the Kutenai for attracting wild horses, which he believed was employed by Blackfoot horse medicine men for the same purpose. It was prepared from the lachrymal glands of the elk, which have a strong odor, especially if the animal is taken in rutting season.

These are the only suggestions of possible use of animal materials in Blackfoot horse medicines. Certainly the bulk of the evidence points to the employment of plant materials in these medicines. When I discussed horse medicine with E. C. Moran of Stanford, Mont., a collector of Montana drug plants for commercial uses, he suggested that the locality furnished two plants, known for their drug properties, *Clematis* and *Equisetum*, which would be likely ingredients in Blackfoot horse medicines. *Clematis* has been reported as a horse medicine among both the Nez Percé and Teton Dakota, but I have no evidence of its use as such by the Blackfoot.

COMPARATIVE DATA ON HORSE-MEDICINE IDENTIFICATION

Table 8 summarizes information on plant medicines known to have been used as horse stimulants by other horse-using tribes of the West. I am indebted to Edith V. A. Murphy, botanist, employed by the United States Indian Bureau, for field data on Arapaho, Nez Percé, and Ute usages. Eugene Barrett, forester, Rosebud Reservation, kindly supplied the Teton Dakota data. It is noteworthy that *Thalictrum* sp., which grows in the Blackfoot habitat, was employed as a horse stimulant by more than one other tribe. *Paeonia brownii*, though not reported from the Blackfoot country, was available in Wyoming and Idaho, at no great distance from the Blackfoot range.

9: Ewers E,G-4,5 (1941-1951) 1955 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

They went after him and found he was Heavenly Colt. He was alive and in good condition. Heavenly Colt was returned to his rightful Blood owner. That horse had great secret power.

Like humans, horses were believed to survive death as spirits possessing the power to return and make their spirit presences known to the living. Weasel Tail illustrated his own strong belief in horse spirits by relating a personal experience.

About 50 years ago I visited the lodge of Steel, a Blood Indian. I knew Steel thought his father's spirit was near him at all times. I asked Steel, "Where is your father, Many Spotted Horses?" While I talked I heard a horse whinny far away. Then I heard a horse at the back of the lodge shaking and its stirrups rattling. Then I heard someone talking behind Steel. I could see no one there. It was Steel's father's spirit, come to visit him on his spirit horse."

BELIEFS REGARDING THE ORIGIN OF HORSES

The beliefs of the great majority of aged, fullblood Blackfoot Indians regarding the origin of horses are embodied in their mythology. In the course of my field work on the Blackfeet Reservation, Mont., elderly Piegan informants recited three different myths explaining the origin of horses. One was told by Short Face, recognized by his fellows as the most accomplished storyteller on the reservation, in the fall of 1943. In the summer of 1947, my interpreters, Reuben and Cecile Black Boy, said that during the intervening years Dog Child, a North Piegan, had told them another version of this myth.

Short Face's version, which I have given a title to, follows.

THUNDER'S GIFT OF HORSES

Many years ago, when people used dogs for moving camp, there lived a Piegan named Wise Man. He and his wife were a handsome couple, but they wore very plain buckskin clothes. One day Wise Man said to his wife, "I have been thinking about something. If my plans work out we shall have very fine clothes. Let's move away from here and make camp in the woods. I'll collect all the wood you need, but you must not break any of the sticks I bring in."

Wise Man and his wife moved to the woods. After he had brought in wood, he told his wife, "Now I shall go up the hill and catch some eagles." He ascended the hill, dug a pit, found a dead coyote and cut it open, placed a roof of sticks over the pit after he had climbed into it, and tied the coyote on the roof. When eagles saw the coyote they swooped down and began pecking at the carcass. Wise Man grabbed each eagle in turn as it ate, pulled it into the pit and wrung its neck. He caught eight eagles. Then he returned to camp and told his wife, "I shall make myself a bonnet from these feathers." He made his bonnet—

[94] Wilson (1924, pp. 144–145) reported Hidatsa belief that all horses had supernatural powers, and that if horses were not properly cared for they would not increase in numbers and might leave their negligent owners. A Hidatsa informant also claimed the Assiniboin considered their horses sacred and sang sacred songs to them (ibid., p. 142). Dorsey (1894, p. 499) mentioned the Dakota custom of praying to horses. The existence of their horse medicine cults is evidence of belief in the supernatural powers of horses among other Plains and Plateau tribes.

9: Ewers E,G-4,5 (1941-1951) 1955 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

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a circle of feathers standing straight up, with a feather trailer down the back. Then he fashioned some weasel snares and went about the countryside snaring weasels. He took them to his wife and said, "Now, tan these." She replied, "But what are you going to do with them?" "I shall use them to decorate my suit," said Wise Man. She tanned the weaselskins and sewed them on his plain buckskin suit as a fringe, just as he requested. Then he donned his new costume and asked her, "How do I look? Take a good look at me." She looked him up and down admiringly and replied, "You are very handsome looking man." Wise Man then said, "I am completely dressed. Now I shall show you how to dress."

He went into the woods and found an elk lick with many elk around it. With bow and arrows he killed a large number of them. From each he took only two teeth. He carried them to camp and drilled a hole near the base of each tooth. Then he showed the elk teeth to his wife and told her how to sew these teeth on her plain elkskin dress. When she had done that, she put on her dress, stood before her husband and asked him, "Now, how do I look?" Wise Man replied, "You are certainly a very beautiful woman. That is how I want you to look when you have occasion to wear your best clothes."

The couple then returned to the camp of their people. When the others saw their fine clothes, all the young men and women wanted their garments. They offered to barter their most valuable possessions for them. But Wise Man refused, saying. "I will not sell these clothes. You must hunt and make them for yourselves just as we have done. But I am going back to the woods and I shall make up another outfit which I shall trade you."

So Wise Man and his wife returned to their former camping place in the woods. There he met a man. The stranger said to him, "I shall help you. You haven't fixed that bonnet right. You should have quills on the feathers. You should have quills on your leggings and shirt too." Wise Man had never heard of quills and he asked, "But how shall I get these things you call quills? How shall I learn to fix them on my bonnet and shirt?" "Thunder will show you how to do that," the man replied. "But I have never seen Thunder," said Wise Man. "Where is he?" The stranger explained, "He lives above. You follow along the mountains to the end of the earth. There you will find a way to go to him."

Wise Man went to his wife and told her of his talk with the stranger. "A man came to me who told me how I can make my clothes even prettier by putting quills on them. He named someone who could help me to do this. I don't know who that is, but he told me how to find him." His wife answered, "All right, go look for him."

So Wise Man loaded his dog and went away, following the foot of the mountains. He passed mountain lions, bears and other large animals but they did not harm him. Some of them turned into persons. Finally he reached the end of the mountains. Ahead was nothing but water. The shore was thick with brush. Wise Man climbed a cliff and looked down. In the brush he saw a lodge. He descended and entered the lodge. It was empty. After a long time a man entered and spoke to him. "Where are you going? You can't go any farther." Wise Man replied, "I am going to find Thunder." The man said, "He is in the sky. You can't go there. But I shall help you, my boy. Climb this cliff and you will find some goats. Kill one, cut off the ends of his horns and bring them back here."

Wise Man did as he was told. When he returned with the pieces of horn the man told him, "I will give you my moccasins. Fasten these goat horns to them and they will help to hold you up. I shall help you. Follow me." They

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began to ascend, Wise Man following in the footsteps of the stranger, who had told him to look only ahead. After they had climbed a long time they reached a level place. It was another world.

Then the stranger turned to Wise Man and said, "This is Thunder's home. After you have walked a way you will be surrounded by horses. They are dangerous animals, but they will not hurt you. I shall leave you here. Go on to Thunder's camp. The first animals you meet will be Thunder's horses."

Wise Man walked on until he saw the horses. One of them spied him, and all came toward him and surrounded him. At first Wise Man was afraid. But the strange animals did not harm him. He soon lost his fear and began to pet them. They were so thick around him he could not proceed. But when night came they all lay down and went to sleep. Then Wise Man crawled away from them and walked on toward the lights of two camps in the distance. When he came near them he saw that they were beautifully painted lodges, each with a medicine pipe in front of it. He walked inside one of them. Thunder was there.

When Thunder saw Wise Man he told him to sit down. Then Thunder made a smudge and began to show Wise Man the ritual of the medicine pipe. Wise Man told him, "I came here to find out how to look good in my clothes. I want you to tell me what to do and how to do it. That is what is on my mind." Thunder replied, "My boy, come with me and I shall show you." Outside the lodge Thunder pointed to a porcupine and told Wise Man, "Kill it." This Wise Man did. Then Thunder showed him how to remove the quills, how to flatten them, to dye them different colors and to sew them on garments. When he had finished, Thunder said, "My boy, you have been good. You didn't frighten my horses. They didn't hurt you. They are the animals I ride. Because you did not frighten my horses and they were not afraid of you I shall give you some of them. I'll show you the songs of my pipe and my painted lodges and give them to you also. I'll show you how to pack the pipe on a horse's back. But before I give you all these things you must pay me." Wise Man asked, "What shall I give you?" Thunder said, "Give me a woman from your people, and give me a white buffalo robe." Wise Man asked, "How are you to get the woman?" Thunder replied, "My boy, I can do it with your help." Wise Man then said, "I shall get you a woman. But the white buffalo is very fast. I'll try to get you a white buffalo robe, but it will be very difficult."

Then Thunder went to his herd and selected 10 head of horses, and gave them to Wise Man saying, "Now, my boy, take these. They will raise colts for you and increase. I shall put a porcupine on earth. It too will increase. You can kill porcupines, eat them, and use their quills. Generation after generation of your people will use these things. There will be no end to them. I want you to take the medicine pipe, and in the spring of the year when the leaves begin to come out you will hear me rumbling. Gather your friends quickly and dance to the medicine pipe as I have shown you. I shall see you then and know that you have heard my call. Until the end of the world you will have these things. Not until then shall I take them back."

Thunder then said, "Now, my boy, I'll take you down. Tie the tails of two old mares together. When you have done that you will be on earth again. Tonight there will be a strong wind. If your lodges fall down or if your horses become frightened, I'll take them back. Otherwise you may keep them. In future times many of your old people, to whom I shall give the power, will dream of animal-painted lodges and sacred pipes."

The night after Wise Man's return to earth there was a storm and a very high wind. But the horses were not frightened and the lodges did not fall. Wise

9: Ewers E,G-4,5 (1941-1951) 1955 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

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Man kept the things Thunder gave him. Until this day the Indians have porcupines, painted lodges, medicine pipes, and horses.

In March 1943, Chewing-Black-Bones recited another myth explaining the origin of horses. He claimed that Head Carrier, who died half a century earlier, told him the following story, which I have named.

WATER SPIRIT'S GIFT OF HORSES

A long time ago there was a poor boy who tried to obtain secret power so that he might be able to get some of the things he wanted but did not have. He went out from his camp and slept alone on mountains, near great rocks, beside rivers. He wandered until he came to a large lake northeast of the Sweetgrass Hills (Lake Pakowki). By the side of that lake he broke down and cried. The powerful man who lived in that lake heard him and told his son to go to the boy and find out why he was crying. The son went to the sorrowing boy and told him that his father wished to see him. "But how can I go to him?" the lad asked. The son replied, "Hold onto my shoulders and close your eyes. Don't look until I tell you to do so."

They started into the water. As they moved along the son told the boy, "My father will offer you your choice of the animals in this lake. Be sure to choose the old mallard and its little ones."

When they reached his father's lodge, the son told the boy to open his eyes. He did so and was taken into the father's lodge. The old man said to him, "Son, come sit over here." Then he asked, "My boy, why did you come here?" The boy explained, "I have been a very poor boy. I left my camp to look for secret power so that I may be able to start out for myself." The old man then said, "Now, son, you are going to become the leader of your tribe. You will have plenty of everything. Do you see all the animals in this lake? They are all mine." The boy, remembering the son's advice, said, "I should thank you for giving me as many of them as you can." Then the old man offered him his choice. The boy asked for the mallard and its young. The old man replied, "Don't take that one. It is old and of no value." But the boy insisted. Four times he asked for the mallard. Then the old man said, "You are a wise boy. When you leave my lodge my son will take you to the edge of the lake. When it is dark he will catch the mallard for you. When you leave the lake don't look back."

The boy did as he was told. At the margin of the lake the water spirit's son collected some marsh grass and braided it into a rope. With the rope he caught the old mallard and led it ashore. He placed the rope in the boy's hand and told him to walk on, but not to look back until daybreak. As the boy walked along he heard the duck's feathers flapping on the ground. Later he could no longer hear that sound. As he proceeded he heard the sound of heavy feet behind him, and a strange noise, the cry of an animal. The braided marshgrass turned into a rawhide rope in his hand. But he did not look back until dawn.

At daybreak he turned around and saw a strange animal at the end of the line, a horse. He mounted it and, using the rawhide rope as a bridle, rode back to camp. Then he found that many horses had followed him.

The people of the camp were afraid of the strange animals. But the boy signed to them not to fear. He dismounted and tied a knot in the tail of his horse. Then he gave everybody horses from those that had followed him. There were plenty for everyone and he had quite a herd left over for himself.

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Five of the older men in camp gave their daughters to him in return for the horses he had given them. They gave him a fine lodge also.

Until that time the people had had only dogs. But the boy told them how to handle the strange horses. He showed them how to use them for packing, how to break them for riding and for the travois, and he gave the horse its name, elk dog. One day the men asked him, "These elk dogs, would they be of any use in hunting buffalo?" The boy replied, "They are fine for that. Let me show you." Whereupon he showed his people how to chase buffalo on horseback. He also showed them how to make whips and other gear for their horses. Once when they came to a river the boy's friends asked him, "These elk dogs, are they of any use to us in water?" He replied, "That is where they are best. I got them from the water." So he showed them how to use horses in crossing streams.

The boy grew older and became a great chief, a leader of his people. Since that time every chief has owned a lot of horses.

The third horse origin myth was told by Mrs. Cecile Cree Medicine [115] in July 1947. She explained that her father, Running Crane, chief of the Lone Eater's Band of the Piegan, had told it to her. This myth I have also named.

HOW MORNING STAR MADE THE FIRST HORSE

Before the Piegan had horses they had dogs. Then everything was flint. There was no iron.

One night a Piegan invited all the chiefs to his lodge. He told his wife, "You sit outside with the baby." Her sister saw her sitting there and asked her what she was doing outside alone. She replied, "My husband does not want me to be in the lodge with the chiefs." She was very unhappy. Later she looked into the sky and saw the bright morning star. She said, "I wish I could be married to that pretty star up there."

Next morning she went to pick up buffalo chips for fuel. She saw a young man approaching her. He said, "Now I have come for you." But she replied, "I will have nothing to do with you. Why do you want me to go away with you? I'm married." Then the young man reminded her, "Last night when you were sitting outside your lodge you said you wanted to marry me, the bright star. I heard you and now I have come for you." She replied, "Yes, that's right. Let's go."

The young man said, "Take hold of my back. Follow me, but keep your eyes shut." She did as she was told. After a time the young man told her to open her eyes. When she did she saw that the country was strange to her. Young Morning Star then asked her into his lodge where an old man was sitting. He was Sun, Morning Star's father. Sun said, "My son, why did you bring this girl here?" The young man answered, "It was the girl's wish. So I went after her."

After a time Morning Star and this woman had a little boy. Old grandfather Sun said, "I shall give the boy something to play with." He gave him a crooked tree which was every bit the shape of a little horse, and said, "Now, my boy, play with this." When Morning Star saw his son playing with the wooden toy he said to his wife, "Wouldn't it look better if this plaything had fur like a deer?" She agreed. So they put fur on it. Then Morning Star said, "Another thing it should have is a tail." So he put a black tail on it and added some ears as well. Then he said, "Now let's take some black dirt and rub its hoofs so they will shine." So it was done.

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Then his wife said to the Morning Star, "Now you are finished. Are you satisfied?" "No," replied Morning Star, "Put the boy on the animal's back. Let him ride it." When the boy was astride the toy, Morning Star said, "Now I shall make it go. I shall call sh-sh-sh-sh four times. The fourth time it will start like an animal." The first time Morning Star called, the horse began to move its legs. The second time, the horse began to move its tail. The third time it moved its ears. When he called sh-sh-sh-sh the fourth time the horse shied. Then Morning Star called "ka-ka-ka-ka," and the horse stood still. Morning Star cut a piece of rawhide for a bridle. The boy had great fun with his little horse.

Later, when the boy's brothers and sisters went to dig wild turnips, his mother asked Morning Star, "Why can't I do that?" He told her she might go with the others, but she must not dig the turnip with the big leaves. So she joined the party. She saw the big-leafed turnip and began to dig around it. At last she dug it up. Dust came up through the hole. When the dust cleared away she looked into the hole and way below she saw her own camp and her parents. She began to cry.

When she returned to Morning Star's lodge he saw her swollen eyes and knew what had happened. He asked her, "Why are you crying?" She told him that she was lonesome for her parents. Morning Star then told her she could return to them. He instructed his people to cut rawhide rope. They made a great pile of it. Then he told his wife, "I'll take you down the rope first. Then I'll take the horse down by my own power." He wrapped his wife and son in buffalo robes, tied them to the rope, and lowered them through the turnip hole.

Two young fellows lying on their backs near the camp of the woman's parents saw a strange object descending from the sky. They were frightened and started to run away when the bundle reached the earth. But the woman called to them, "Untie me." They untied her and went to camp to tell the woman's husband that she was back. When her husband saw the little boy he told his wife, "I don't want him here. Don't feed that boy. Don't give him any bedding. Let him sleep by the door." The woman was watched so closely she couldn't help her son. A half-brother took pity on the little boy. He hid some of his own food and gave it to the little boy to keep him from starving.

Morning Star saw how badly his son was treated on earth. One day when the half-brother took the boy into the brush hunting they saw a strange man. They were afraid and started to run when the man called, "Stop!" They halted and sat down beside the man. He told the little boy, "You are my son. I know your brother loves you and has fed you. But I have come after you because you have been abused." The little boy began to cry. "No, I want to stay with my brother." Then Morning Star explained, "Three of us cannot go. I can only take you. But I promise you I'll give your brother some great power here on earth."

Before he departed Morning Star told the older boy, "Go to that lake yonder. Sleep beside it for four nights. I'll give you power. The man in that lake will help you too. But I warn you that before sunrise, while you are sleeping, animals like I gave your little brother will come out of the lake. When you wake, pay no attention to the other horses. Just try to catch the little, shaggy, buckskin colt. If you catch that colt all of the other horses will step beside him. If you don't catch him, all will run back into the water."

The morning after the older brother's first night by the lake he tried to catch one of the pretty colts rather than the ugly little buckskin Morning Star had told him to get. All of the horses ran back into the lake. The second morning the older brother tried again and failed. The third morning all of the horses got away once more. During the fourth night Morning Star came to the boy in

9: Ewers E,G-4,5 (1941-1951) 1955 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

his dream and said, "Now, my boy, I told you to catch that shaggy buckskin colt. If you don't catch him tomorrow you will not have my power."

Next morning, when the boy awoke he saw the horses again. This time he singled out the little colt and roped him with a rawhide line. All the other horses stampeded toward the lake. As the leading ones reached the shore the little buckskin whinnied. They all turned and ran back toward him. On the fifth night Morning Star again appeared to the boy in his dream, saying, "Now, my boy, when you return home with those horses give everyone but your father a horse. Because he abused you, he shouldn't have any."

When the boy returned to camp and distributed the horses, his father became very angry. "Why didn't you give me one of them?" he raved. The boy, with Morning Star's power, struck his father and killed him.

Morning Star then told the boy, "From now on your people will have horses. You will no longer need to use dogs. In time you will have many horses. Your horses will never disappear. You need never walk any more."

The principal chief of the camp sent word to the boy that he wanted him for a son-in-law. He gave the boy his two daughters and offered him his place as head chief.

More than 40 years ago Duvall obtained a condensed version of this third myth, which was said to have been told by Head Carrier many years before. As published (Wissler, 1912, pp. 285–286), this story links the origin of horses with the woman-who-married-a-star episode, although details of the creation of horses by the star differ from Mrs. Cree Medicine's version, and the episode explaining the later acquisition of horses by the older brother is lacking.

Two other Blackfoot myths explaining the acquisition of the first horse from the waters of a lake have been published. One account was told to George Bird Grinnell by Almost-a-Dog, a Piegan. It most nearly approximates the episode of the acquisition of horses from a lake by the elder brother contained in Mrs. Cree Medicine's version (Grinnell, 1895, pp. 166–168). The other myth, told Rev. Edward F. Wilson by the North Blackfoot chief, Big Plume, purports to explain how the Shoshoni first obtained horses from the waters of a large, salt water lake "away south" (Wilson, 1887, p. 185).

The number and variety of Blackfoot myths explaining the origin of horses may be due to the tendency for each narrator to elaborate the basic theme as he sees fit and to link the story of the origin of horses with portions of other myths. It is significant that the five recorded Blackfoot mythological accounts of the origin of horses credit the first horses either to sky spirits or to underwater spirits. In this respect the horse origin myths follow the tribal pattern of imputing the origin of their most sacred possessions to one or the other of these spirit sources. The Sun Dance and medicine pipe are represented in Blackfoot mythology as gifts of Sun and Thunder, two of the most feared and revered sky spirits. The beaver bundle and buffalo painted lodges are represented as gifts of the underwater people, also held in great awe by the Blackfoot. These myths con-

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stitute evidence that to the native mind the horse was a godsend of importance comparable to that of their most sacred ceremonies, created by the same supernatural powers who gave the Indians their traditional ceremonial institutions.[95]

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[95] In the 1870's Lieutenant Bradley recorded a Crow myth to the effect that their first horses came out of the water (Bradley, 1923, pp. 298–299). Possibly Crow and Piegan myths relating to the water origin of horses developed from a common source. In 1947, Enoch Smoky recited to me a Kiowa myth, which he claimed his grandfather had told him. "It used to be that the Kiowa used only dogs for pack animals. Then one time an old medicine man had a dream in which he saw a strange animal. He began thinking about how he could make it. He took some mud and made a body, covered it with the hair of a prairie dog, gave it the eyes of an eagle, hoofs made from a turtle shell and wings to make it travel faster. But the horse flew away up into the air and did not return. There it remained to bring cyclones. Later the old man made another animal just like the first, but without wings. It was successful. From that time on the Kiowa have had horses."

Song Services, Bundle Openings and Curing Ceremonies

184 177 533 Song services were meetings of the singing groups and served both as practice sessions and as forms of social gathering for the people involved. The sessions were held in the home of one of the singers, a relative, or a friend. A few kinsmen and friends might attend and an evening was spent in singing and drumming old and new songs. The session would break up at the discretion of the singers and might be followed with a late-hour supper.

796 778 184 177 Bundle openings and curing ceremonies (according to informant and newspaper reports) were religious rituals to which people were invited. The reports indicate that those in attendance were always people of Indian-orientation. Some were believers and others were sympathetic but noncommitted members of the participants' families. The activities on these occasions were determined by the ritual of the particular bundle or cure, but involved singing, drumming, [782] prayers and some dancing by selected participants. The owner of the [302] bundle regularly painted the faces of those in attendance as a mark of prayer for their well being. Bundle opening ceremonies are followed by a feast. One such ceremony held recently at Starr School was described by one the neighbors:

> The beaver dance given by Jim White Calf was held at the home of Jim and Amy Whitegrass despite the terrific storm and sudden cold. There were many people from Browning out to see this rare dance, that has long been forgotten. Among those attending were Mr. and Mrs. Fish Wolf Robe, Mr. and Mrs. Charlie Horn, Mr. and Mrs. Tom Many Guns and Mary Ground besides the [535] many people of our community. The dance began with the [825] rythmic [sic] beating on hides to certain songs. The bundle was opened by Jim White Calf and Maggie Many Hides. The bundle consists of many skins of useful animals and small birds that are of help to the owner. The beaver for "energy," the otter

for "speed," the ermine for "beauty," the swan for "grace" and the little birds for their endurance of the cold in the winter. The people were then painted and eight danced in a most graceful manner. Maggie Many Hides, Mary Ground, Isabelle, Cecile Horn, Mrs. Fish, Annie Old Person, Mrs. Tom Many Guns all danced like beavers with sticks in their mouths and hands. The usual meal was served after a monstrous amount of energy was put into the dancing and singing. A delicious berry soup, boiled meat, fried bread and a dessert were consumed by everyone. At the end of the dance one certain lady gets up and dances with little small deer hooves and punches a man in the crowd and it goes on until everyone is dancing. It was a most enjoyable occasion for a grand time was had by all.[173]

This "dance" was "long forgotten" by the reporter and others in the community, but not by the bundle-owner and the named participants, several of whom owned or had owned bundles themselves. Here was a gathering of Indian-oriented people conducting an Indian ceremony. Some undoubtedly experienced the deep religious experience of a beaver bundle opening, others had a "grand time" at a "most enjoyable occasion," a social gathering of people who shared interests in aspects of Indian culture.

Visiting

The social grouping of Indian-oriented people gains further support from observations of informal clustering. At the Indian Days encampment, and at the social dances in particular, it was relatively easy to watch for the Indian-oriented people and to notice with whom they spent their time in informal groupings--visiting, chatting, watching and relaxing. The range of Indian-oriented people was expanded by

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[173] "Starr School News," The Glacier Reporter, Browning, Montana, Vol. 31, No. 34, October 12, 1961, p. 6.

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In spite of this faunal richness of the Missouri-Saskatchewan region, there were two mammals which far outranked all the others in their economic importance to the Indian occupants of the region in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. They were the buffalo and the beaver. The buffalo was the primitive Indian's staff of life. The beaver was the most sought after animal by white fur traders, who furnished our earliest knowledge of the Indian occupation of this region and who influenced the movement of tribes within it.

B G 825

B G 439 178

The Buffalo - The Indians' Staff of Life: It is a truism that the buffalo was the staff of life of the Indians occupying this area in the period prior to 1883. Not only was buffalo their primary food resource, but buffalo hides provided their winter clothing, covers for their lodges, and materials for the construction of nearly 100 other articles useful in the daily and ceremonial lives of these Indians. (Ewers, 1955, pp. 149-151). The existence of vast herds of buffalo in this region, and the habits of this gregarious, wandering animal strongly influenced the customs of the Indian tribes who exploited the buffalo as their primary natural resources. Following the moving buffalo made the tipi a practical dwelling. Hunting this gregarious animal made the division of tribes into bands a practical social and political arrangement.

B G 825 [237]

B G 182

Not only was the Missouri-Saskatchewan area stocked with vast herds of buffalo before and at the time of the first treaty of these Indians with the United States, but it was the last refuge of the great northern buffalo herd until 1883.

B G 136

[P. 35]

778 783 824 paraphernalia. It was chewed in ceremonies involving prolonged fasting as a means of extended endurance. Sweet grass was used generally by everyone as incense with daily prayers.

846 824 783 An occasion for the use of sweet grass---one that was somewhat outside the bundle system but nevertheless of great importance---was the return of a woman with her newborn child. Traditionally, a woman would remain apart from her husband for about thirty-four days after giving birth. Just [887] before returning home she would be assisted by a woman so old she could have no more children. A complete set of new clothes was laid out for the mother. While this was being done the mother bathed in water scented with sweet grass. A smudge was prepared, and when the mother had finished bathing she covered herself with a robe and stood over the incense from the smudge. Then her new clothes were held to the smudge four times before she was [302] allowed to put them on. Her face, arms, and feet were ochred red. She was now considered to be completely cleansed (from the bad blood of the birth). The old woman who assisted her took her prepartum clothing and threw it in the river, where it floated away or sank out of sight. (Women who could not afford a new set of clothes kept their old ones and were purified in [842] them.) The mother then returned home as if she were newly married. (It was at this time that a woman would begin the practice of birth control; for this purpose a mixture of plants having abortifacient or contraceptive properties was contained in a religious bundle of special design.)

824 Braids of sweet grass were tied vertically around the base of the Horn Society staffs. Braids were also strung on the inside of headbands of the Motokiks headdresses.

[825] One informant told us that the Owl and the Loon in the medicine pipes owned the sweet grass and that the bear owned the juniper; but we have not

824 [825] been able to review this with him. He said that the cutting of small trees was sanctified with fire originating from a sweet grass lighter.

TOBACCO

Nicotiana multivalvis

276 796 182 Smoking was an important part of Blackfoot ritual: like the communal meal, it tended to emphasize the inclusiveness of those partaking. 575 249 796 Traditionally, the native tobacco (Nicotiana multivalvis) was ceremonially planted and harvested by members of a North Blackfoot society known as the Tobacco society (Fig. 4). (It is noteworthy that this society was not a [184] [561] part of the age-graded system and that it was maintained only by the North Blackfoot.) For about a week, each spring, members gathered at the sacred planting-grounds. Elaborate ceremonies accompanied the sowing. The tobacco [231] [415] seed, with fertilizer, had been stored through the winter in pericardium containers of the society's Tobacco bundles. (The same bundle, less certain paraphernalia, was alternately called the Beaver bundle.)

249 [182] [784] [796] [776] Between the period of planting and harvesting, taboos prevented anyone from visiting the plots, because the young plants were being tended by supernatural Small People, who did their gardening in return for offerings of miniature apparel, which had been left at the close of the planting ceremony (Fig. 5).

824 778 276 [249] At harvest, in the fall, the seed was used to replenish the bundle supplies, and the leaves were distributed to the appropriate claimants, who in turn later distributed leaves to the other divisions of the tribe. The tobacco usually was mixed with the leaves of kinnikinnik (Arctos-taphylos uva-ursi) or the dried cambium or red-osier dogwood (Cornus stolonifera). The mixtures were included with all religious bundles---either in the bundle proper or in a preliminary bundle.

TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE [7]

541 824 777 pressed onto the stems. Horses so cursed were sure to slacken in the race.

Another method made use of a quirt (or a rod). The sau-gas-sin was placed in the mouth, and the rider sprayed the quirt with the juice. This quirt was not used to whip the horse. When the race began, the rider would try to get on the right side of the other horses; he carried the magic quirt but whipped his horse with a regular one. At an opportune time the rider threw back the sprayed quirt, causing the other horses to fall behind.

Sometimes a man used a small, flat stone that had been sprayed with the root. When no one was looking it was thrown at the competing horse. That horse would trip, probably break a leg, and die; and its owner would be sick for days.

524 525 824 777 For use in the hand game, the root was kept in the mouth. This would make the other players lazy, and they would lose continually. But if a man was suspected of using the power root, there was a defense against its [825] influence. The loser went to his lodge (or to one nearby) and asked for a small piece of meat, which he combined with man-sage leaves. Carrying this charm in his pocket, he returned to the gambling place, where he walked abruptly among the participants and took the dice in his hands. Then he pretended to sing and perform with the dice---all the while secretly rubbing [827] them with the meat-and-sage mixture. After he handed back the dice the man who had been using the sau-gas-sin would get a headache and grow lazy, losing all he had won.

824 777 [782] [695] The power root was used by ceremonialists to bless others with long life and good luck. Vows were made with sau-gas-sin, ceremony called for spitting on the hands and touching the head, shoulders, chest and hips: that insured the validity of whatever was said thereafter.

000 We have been told that the power root was once included in the rites of

BIRTH CONTROL

824 In the matter of birth control, the Blackfoot practiced it in two ways.
842 Conception was thought to be avoided through the use of a special ceremonial
778 bundle and abortions were performed with the aid of an herbal brew. The
[847] former required the services of a diviner who professed the power to prevent
[779] conception while the latter was an event that could be accomplished by the mother alone.

[126] Several of these anti-conception bundles, constructed between 1880-1930,
[791] have been collected and the authors reported of at least fourteen more on the reservations of the Blackfoot, still being used by elderly diviners, all women.

[301] There is a consistant pattern of bundle contents (see Figs. 27 &28);
[237] otter-skin wristlets each with an incised bone bead, the design representing
[386] a snake; yellow ochre in a skinbag; and a quantity of pulverized plant
[532] material in another skinbag. An exception to this pattern is the bundle
[291] collected by Ewers which contained a beaded, snake-shaped belt and lacked
[301] wristlets.

824 A woman seeking conception control would approach a diviner for
778 instruction in the use of the bundle. The diviner would, for a fee, use her
791 842 bundle on the patient or make one for her. Without going into the details
[302] of the ceremony, we should note that the major part of the ritual involves the ochreing of the body from the head down to the navel and from the feet
[301] to the knees, thereby isolating the reproductive area. The wristlets were
[784] worn for a prescribed period during which time the patient was enjoined to
[825] observe certain taboos. The ceremony was usually performed in the spring when the snakes emerged from hibernation.

infusion applied to saddle sores. (Ewers, J.C., The Horse in Blackfoot Indian Culture, p. 47).

Lewisia pygmaea (L. rediviva), Lomatium dissectum (Leptotaenia multifida Nutt.), Valeriana sp., Yucca sp.

An infusion of anyone or all of the above plants was administered through a horses's mouth or nostril for colic or distemper. (Ewers, J.C., The Horse in Blackfoot Indian Culture, p. 49).

Lomatium dissectum (Leptotaenia multifida Nutt.)

A fertility amulet was made with slices of this "big turnip". The slices were strung on a buckskin thong and hung around a mare's neck all winter in the belief that she would bear an exceptionally strong colt in the spring. (Ewers, J.C., The Horse in Blackfoot Indian Culture, p. 55).

Muhlenbergia richardsonis (M. squarrosa (Trin) Rhydb.)

This plant was a probable horse medicine. (Ewers, J.C., The Horse in Blackfoot Indian Culture, p. 276).

Nicotiana spp.

A mixture of tobacco, a bitter grass, fat and salt was applied to saddle sores to promote rapid healing. (Ewers, J.C., The Horse in Blackfoot Indian Culture, p. 47).

Osmorhiza chilensis (Washingtonia divaricata)

Roots of the 'smell mouth' (identified by Hellson and Gadd as Osmorhize occidentalis were fed to mares during the winter in the belief that the effect would keep them in good condition for foaling. (McClintock, W., The Old North Trail, p. 525).

"Strong Root"

This plant was fed to horses to make them hardy. (Ewers, J.C. The Horse in Blackfoot Indian Culture, p. 276).

18: Wissler E-5 (1903-1912) 1913
NF6 Blackfoot NF6

Drums are used, but no whistles. 561
The faces of the women members are painted like those of the men. 575
The formal ceremonies were usually held early in the morning, "Because the buffalo get up early in the morning and go down to drink." Out-of-doors they sit in a circle, each man's wife, or corresponding woman member, sits directly behind him. The men dance in pairs, holding hands with the free hand on the hip. (Fig. 12.) All the pairs face the same way, except the leaders. The latter always keep in the reverse direction. The dancing is 796 535 [534] [825]

Fig. 11.

Fig. 12.

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575
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Fig. 11. Sketch showing the Costume of a Front-tail.
Fig. 12. Order of Dancing for the Front-tails. Drawn by Big-brave.

said to be in imitation of the buffalo. The four drummers come behind with the women, who assist in the singing. After a dance, they rest and smoke; this is repeated four times. When they are about to begin, the drummers strike four times and at each all shout, "Ho-o-o-o!" Before each rest there is one shout. It will be noted that the members carry nothing in their hands. 561 575 796 535

The transfer of membership is well described in Mr. Duvall's notes obtained from Big-brave:— 561 575 796 432

18: Wissler E-5 (1903-1912) 1913
NF6 Blackfoot NF6

561 575 124 support of this they call attention to the fact that this pair dance around through the camp at the same time and in the same manner as the other societies.

561 575 796 [534] [237] [292] [778] Their regalia consist of a small bulb rattle to the handle of which is attached a coyote tail and a bunch of feathers for the head. No eagle feathers were used. Bone whistles and a coyote skin around the neck complete the list. Big-brave, the present owner of one set also has a drum. This drum seems to be a special medicine object and to be used only by and in connection with the ceremonies by a brave-dog. Our informants state, however, that this drum was originated by Big-brave and was not previously a part of the regalia for the brave-dogs and is not recognized or used by the other member.

[302] [825] The brave-dogs usually paint the entire body in white. The face is given the "coyote painting." The entire lower part of the face is painted red. This painting was sometimes spoken of as "eating raw meat." In explanation, it is said that when a coyote has been eating, his mouth and nose are generally red with blood, and that also he is lucky and usually gets his meat whenever he looks for it.

561 575 726 The obligations taken on by the brave-dogs are rather exacting. They must never under any circumstances run away from the enemy or turn back. If enemies appear in their paths, they must walk straight forward regardless of the consequences. In battle they are supposed to stand in front of the enemy and dance and sing. However, if their companions desire to save them they may release them from the obligation by whipping. Thus in fighting, a friend may ride up and strike the brave-dog with a whip and at once he runs away. For example we were told that,

> Running-buffalo, the father of Elk-horn was a brave-dog. Once there was a fight between the Blackfoot and the Assiniboine in what is now the southern part of the Montana Reservation. The Assiniboine were in a hole and hard to get at. Running-buffalo rode up, got off his horse, and with his rattle in his hand, singing the brave-dog songs, went directly to the hole and jumped in among the Assiniboine. His war party followed close at his heels and succeeded in routing the enemy. All brave-dogs are believed to have great power. Once Running-buffalo was shot through the abdomen with three or four arrows. He asked that some buffalo intestines be cooked for him, saying that he would use them to replace the injured parts of his body. He ate them and recovered.

561 575 539 Like all other societies and medicines, the brave-dogs had their own songs and their dance. The sentiments expressed in the songs are in keeping with their obligations. For example one of them runs, "I want to throw my body away." Another "I want dogs to eat my body." They have a song in which they ask for arrows, and while singing it they go into any tipi and take an arrow from each quiver they find therein.

18: Wissler E-5 (1903-1912) 1913
NF6 Blackfoot NF6

the songs begnn and the members rose to dance. There seems to have been no special form of dance, but at times they crowded into a mass, at others formed in files and again in half circles. They always held their lances at a forward angle. The rule was to dance at various intervals as the camp was circled. The two riders mounted and crossed back and forth in front of the leaders to reverse them (p. 412).[1] When the procession again reached the starting point the two riders dismounted and joined in the final dance. 561 575 796 535

The following account of this public ceremony is from McClintock:—

When the kit-foxes gave a dance, they opened up two large lodges and made them into one. For four days and four nights they sat inside, painting and dressing themselves, singing and making ready for the dance, only appearing at night, outside of the dance lodge. On the fifth day they marched through the camp. Their chief wore the fox-skin, with the head made into the form of a hood. The nose was in front, the ears on the top and the skin, with bells fastened to the tail, hung down his back. The face of the leader was painted green, to look as frightful as possible and inspire the spectators with awe. The second in rank, called the White-circle-man, carried a spear, with one end bent into a circle. It had bells attached, and was covered with white swan's down and white plumes. The third held a spear of the same shape, covered with white feathers, but fringed with black and red plumes. The rest of the members carried pointed spears, covered with otter skins ornamented with feathers and bells. The kit-foxes all painted their faces. They wore, for garters around their legs, wide bands of otter skins, with bells attached, and an eagle feather, decorated with red, green and yellow, in their back hair. White weasel-skins were also attached to either end of this feather, while a strip of otter skin was suspended from its centre. When they marched through the camp they formed in the shape of a fox head. The chief went first standing for the nose. Behind him were the second and third men for the eyes, and then came the rest of the society in a group, all together representing a fox head. The two second-men, as the eyes, watched the chief, who was the nose, or leader, and acted just as he directed, the rest following after. When they were ready to dance, they sat in lines. In the first line were the regular members. If there were men withdrawing from the society, or giving their spears to new candidates, they sat in the second line, while the wives of the members sat behind. As soon as the drum began, the chief started the dance. The two circle men with the white spears followed. After them came the other members, with otter spears. They danced in pairs, — the same way that kit-foxes run together. They gave short regular jumps with their feet close together, imitating the movements of a fox, barking and moving about, first in one direction, and then in another, just as a fox does. The two second-men (eyes) danced between the two lines, barking and swinging their spears. They did not move in straight lines, because the fox never goes straight. His tail always seems to guide him. When the white-circle men shouted, 'That is enough,' the dance ceased and they all seated themselves. After a short rest the dance was continued.[1] [346] [272] [237] [302] [411] [531] [525]

Some of the songs run: "Fox says, four times I am going to run. Days are my medicine; they are powerful. Nights are my medicine; they are powerful." [539]

[1] McClintock, 446–447.

A. [See Category 116--Analyst]
A

18: Wissler E-5 (1903-1912) 1913
NF6 Blackfoot NF6

The ceremony within the enclosure is chiefly that of the transfer.[1] For this four days and nights were required. The incoming members were required to abstain from sleep during this entire period. During the night they often paraded about the camps, occasionally shouting. A curious thing is that during this period they are forbidden to scratch themselves with the fingers but are given scratching sticks. Should they use the fingers they will become scabby and vermin-infested like the kit-fox. At no time must fox hair be burned in a member's tipi and no rabbit meat cooked at his fireplace. McClintock states that members were not permitted to kill or trap the kit-fox.[1] According to Grinnell, "if they were at war in summer and wanted a storm to come up, they would take some dirt and water and rub it on the kit-fox skin, and this would cause a rain-storm to come up. In winter, snow and dirt would be rubbed on the skin and this would bring up a snow-storm."[2]

Unlike the horns, the wives were not members; but they were painted by the former members in the manner described for the horns, to give them the power to care for and handle their husbands' regalia. We obtained no account of this ceremony, further than the belief that it was identical with that of the horn society (p. 410). The notion that the women were not members may, of course, be but a difference in point of view, since their functions in the kit-fox seem to have been about the same as in the horns.[3]

In closing, it may be noted that we find a tradition that the kit-fox as here described was the result of an ancient union between two other societies. What these were, we did not learn. Big-brave says he saw the last kit-fox dance some fifty years ago, but that for many years several of the lances were kept and transferred as other bundles. The lances and headdress were often carried to war as individual war bundles. In former times, only members were permitted to touch the lances or any other part of the regalia.

THE CATCHERS.

The organization of this society is as follows:—

Leaders (2)	Catchers (x)
Pipe men (2)	Drummers (4)
Tomahawk men (2)	Women members (x)

[1] McClintock, 416.

[2] Grinnell, 262.

[3] Bear-skin and Big-brave state that the horn and kit-fox societies were the same in most respects. Their lances were alike, the women were "painted" the same way, but what is more to the point, the kit-fox songs are sung in the horn ceremonies.

Maximilian (German ed. 577) notes both the kit-fox and the horns, giving the hooked staff as the emblem of the former and asserting that the latter wear "thin horns."

A. [See Category 116, p. 401--Analyst]

224 in the required direction. After the killing the entire camp flocked to the scene, flayed and cut up the animals, leaving nothing behind but a pile of surplus horns. Men, women and children and dogs were all given a load to carry back, and, before leaving, nooses were often set at small holes in the fencing to catch wolves, foxes and badgers, which were soon attracted to the scene.

If the buffalo failed to appear on their accustomed routes the hunters were compelled to go out, individually or in small parties, to seek them farther afield. When snow lay small parties could often drive a number into the deeper drifts, where they floundered helplessly and were held at bay by hunting dogs, until the hunters came up to attack at close quarters [825] with lances and clubs. Skilful hunters, wearing disguises and imitating the movements of the buffalo or wolf, could often approach close to a herd and wound animals with arrows without scaring the rest of the herd. Bulls often turned on the wounded, and the hunter could thus induce a fight, during which he could shoot down the preoccupied beasts.

If a fairly large party could surround a small herd on a still day it was possible to close in on them unnoticed until the hunters were able, by yelling and waving their large robes, to prevent them breaking away. The buffalo would rush around in a circle until exhausted, when they could be wounded, if not killed, by arrows, and finally attacked at close quarters.

Although the buffalo provided by far the greater part of the food-supply of the Blackfoot other game was not entirely [136] neglected. Antelope were formerly as abundant on the Plains, but they were smaller and fleeter and figured far less con- [291] spicuously in hunting. Yet their hides were greatly valued [415] for women's clothing and soft bags, and when they were needed for these purposes a hunt was organized to drive them between lanes, as with the buffalo. But for antelope a pit was constructed instead of a pound. This was usually at the end of a high, angled fence of brush and concealed from the animals by a low transverse fence over which they leaped. Clubbers lay concealed in shallow trenches by the brush fences and struck down the antelope as they fell into the pit or tried to escape. Mountain sheep were prized both for their meat and large 221 curving horns. They were hunted in winter in the foothills, 224 being cornered on rock ledges or driven over precipices.

Summer Hunting

The surrounding of buffalo in the open was most effective in the summer season, when they moved eastwards to the flatter country and formed larger herds. Rich reward resulted from successful hunting, but that success depended on the

and full of manure. The thicker part has a kind of hard lining on the inside. My grandmother said that this part[A] is good for a pregnant mother to eat; she said it will make the baby have a nice round head. Pregnant mothers were not allowed to eat any other parts of the intestines because their faces would become discolored.

The second stomach[B] has all kinds of Blackfoot names. Some call it the Many Folds, or the Indian Bible, or the Eaton's Catalogue. It lies at the beginning of the guts and is made up of many leaves or pages. This has to be washed very thoroughly or it will not taste good. The old people often ate it raw, but certain parts were usually boiled or roasted, and the rest were dried.

The marrow guts are small guts that are streaked with fat. My grandmother usually just threw them on the coals to be roasted. They are not turned inside out. It is funny to watch them cook right on the coals, because they twist and turn from the heat until they are quite shriveled. A more recent way to cook them is to cut them in about six-inch pieces. These are breaded with flour, spiced with salt and pepper, and fried in a skillet. They turn into round rings and sure taste good that way.

Another delicacy is at the very end of the intestines—the last part of the colon. You wash this real good and tie one end shut. Then you stuff the piece with dried berries and a little water and you tie the other end shut. You boil this all day, until it is really tender, and you have a Blackfoot Pudding. You can cut it up for serving into three- or four-inch sections.

My grandmother could only cook up one or two of these intestinal recipes each time she got an animal, so she had to dry the rest of the guts. She washed them all thoroughly, and cut off the excess fat so that what was left just covered the guts evenly. Then she turned the guts inside out and washed them again until all traces of manure were gone. Then she

A [i.e., part of the cow intestine--Analyst]

B [i.e., of the cow--Analyst]

20: Hungry Wolf I-4,5 (no date) 1980
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

I myself have never been treated by such a person for such a matter. So I won't be able to say any more about it. 847

There was another way of preventing childbirth that I will mention just for your interest. My grandmothers have told me that the kind of spiritual powers needed to make this way work are no longer existing today. The last of the people who were involved in these traditions are about gone. 842 178

This other way did not usually involve herbs, just strong faith in the powers of certain spirits. The ones who had these powers would make up symbols of snakes or butterflies, which were considered powerful in childbirth. These were given to women who wanted no children. They had to wear them all the time, next to their bodies. For instance, snakes were made from buckskin, stuffed, and worn like a belt. The stuffings were of special materials, and the snake bodies were specially covered with beadwork and sacred paints. Often the women were instructed to stand over a smudge of special incense, so that the smoke could rise up their bodies. They had to do this every night for as long as they wanted no more children. 842 789 [825]

I heard of one man who lived long ago with famous powers dealing with childbirth. He would make a stick-figure drawing of a man on a certain woman's blanket, and she would have no more children. If she changed her mind and wanted children, he would just sit on her blanket for a while, to change the magic.

WOMEN'S SAGE
(Artemisia Frigida)

One plant in the world of Blackfoot botany was left practically for the exclusive use of the women. For that reason it was called women's sage. A companion plant was called man's sage, because it was used mainly by men. Both kinds 824

buffalo, not to be eaten by them." So he taught the People how to make bows and arrows of wood and how to chip arrowheads from flint. When all the People were armed in this way he led them out on the prairie near a herd of buffalo. He then changed himself into a calf and told the buffalo about the People nearby. The buffalo used to drive the people into a pound where they could butcher them easily. Two rows of large stones like a V led into this pound. Two of the buffalo would rise up from behind the stone piles, where they were hiding, and the People would become frightened and run farther into the V until they were trapped inside the pound. But this time, when the buffalo came after the People to butcher them, they shot their bows and arrows and killed most of the herd. Only two bulls and a few cows got away. From these few were descended all the buffalo that have since lived. One of the cows that survived was outside the pound before the shooting, applying sacred paint to her face. When the shooting began she took the piece of fat, which she was mixing with the paint, and stuck it between her toes. She also grabbed a piece of human meat—left from the last hunt—tucked it under her arm, and fled. Ever since then, buffalo have had fat between their toes and "human" meat under their "arms."

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773

[825]

After the slaughter, Napi showed the People how to make use of the buffalo. He taught them how to remove the large skins and how to cut up the meat. He told them that all of the meat must be eaten and that they must not waste anything for which they could find a use. He taught the women how to stretch the hides on the ground with wooden pegs, and cut the hides with a flint knife. He showed them how to make a hide scraper from an elk's horn edged with flint. He taught them to soak the hide before scraping, and how to work it by first using mashed brains and later by pulling it back and forth through a loop of three-strand sinews taken from the buffalo's back. After they had tanned a number of

[281]
[231]
[412]

On his way he came across a nest of young night hawks. "Where are your parents?" he asked them. "They are getting food for us," was the reply. Now he knew that these were the children of the two night hawks that had just saved his life. His ornery mood returned to him and he shouted at the young birds, "Your parents have just annoyed me greatly. They had no business spoiling my fun out on the prairie. No one asked them to break that stone apart." And with that he took the young birds and put his fingers in each one's mouth and stretched them wide. Then he took a stone and pounded their long beaks until they were quite crooked, and he said, "This is how your kind will look from now on." And that is why night hawks have large mouths and crooked beaks. 539 773 [825]

When the old night hawks returned and discovered what had happened to their children, they immediately flew off after Napi. Napi saw them coming and tried to run from them, but they caught up to him and began throwing stones at his robe. The night hawks told Napi, "You will not be bothered by your robe anymore after we are through with you." Each time they threw a stone, a piece broke off Napi's robe, until the last piece was knocked from his hand. As Napi ran, he turned his head to see if the night hawks were still coming after him. At that moment the birds each threw their last stone, which hit him directly in the mouth, knocking out all his teeth. The night hawks then returned to their nest, satisfied that they had revenged Napi's evil treatment. At Rocky Creek, near Calgary, you can still see the pieces of the big stone, lying in a row as they broke off. [823]

□

Ponah returned to her tipi while we were listening to Mokakin's last story of the night. Between stories, she had mentioned that her "old man" had often told Napi stories at home when she was still a child. She remembered sitting around the wood stove during winter blizzards, 539 517

[p. 54-B]

[Beaver Bundle Ceremony]

the songs were started while all the singers placed ends of their fingers to the floor. [These songs referred to our Earth Mother.] A man took the forked stick and brought a coal from the fire to the altar upon which incense was then made with sweet-grass. A song in the meantime being sung. Gesture in this was shading the eyes with hands, and searching for something on the ground. [This gesture illustrated the words in one of the opening songs, in which the Beaver says, "When spring comes I look outside, and if I see any enemies I dive back down under the water."] Running Wolf ended that song with a prayer. 796 778 533 [824] [201] [782]

Singing was at once renewed. R Wolf and Three Bulls' wife, who were the persons nearest to the bundle, now turned in their seats towards it. The woman took up the bundle and held it up a foot or so from the cushion and towards the altar; it being rather heavy she was assisted by the woman next to her. R Wolf took up a roll of raw hides and rattles and held them also towards the altar. Three Bulls held up a bag containing rattles and then several songs were sung at conclusions as the articles were set down again. After another song Three Bulls' wife unrolled the bundle, while the men spread a tanned beef hide on the floor, hair side down. . . . Continuing his songs, Running Wolf took the bag of rattles and distributed them to the musicians. [A special rawhide was spread over the tanned hide. The rattles from the Bundle may be beaten only on this rawhide.] [237] [534]

In next song, each musician took up one rattle and held it with handle resting on floor, and ended the song by imitating the caw of the crow. . . . [825]

3 songs came next, rattle held as before; at end of each song they cawed, struck the upturned bottom of rattle with ends of fingers of right hand, thus mimicking very nicely the picking and cawing of the crow. Next was a song during which they all took up rattles and beat slowly a few times on the hides in front of them and ended the song by striking some quick and strong blows,

[Beaver Bundle Ceremony]

at the same time yelling in low voices. [More songs.] The two wives of the priests took a bundle of sticks from the sacred bundle and swung them to and from the altar, keeping time. [The cawing and pecking were actually imitations of ravens, not crows. The rattles were usually made either from buffalo rawhide or from scrotums of buffalo. While pecking on the rattles of buffalo skin, the ravens sang, "The wind is our Medicine—Powerful dead buffalo we want," referring to the buffalo carcasses ravens feasted upon after hunters finished butchering them. When the singers first took up the rattles and beat them on the rawhide, they sang, "My rattles are Powerful." The sticks the women took were probably extra incense tongs, which were kept with every Beaver Bundle.]

In fourth song the two squaws got up and danced around the room, one holding a root digger, a stick sharpened at one end and one edge; this was painted red as were all the implements. Whistles were produced and tooted during the following songs. After three more were sung, Running Wolf took a pipe-stem and got down upon his knees and bobbed about in which performance he was soon joined by his wife and Three Bulls' wife. With their blankets drawn up around their heads, they kept up those singular antics, working their hands in imitation of the beaver. That ended by all three people, 3 times lowering their heads to the sacred bundle and grunting several times, and then they took hold of the outside covers and shook them as if to frighten away a spirit. During all this time, "Moons" wife, who is a great wag, was cracking jokes and making fun of almost every movement of Running Wolf. [This part of the ceremony, taken with light spirit, often evokes laughter when the Old People leading the ceremony try to imitate small animals at work. The amount of fun-making at our holy ceremonies would probably amaze a visitor. But our ceremonies are meant to bring happiness and harmony, not gloominess and

[p.93-B]

[Beaver Bundle Ceremony]

fear. When someone is praying, however, there is always silence and respect.] 796 778

Running Wolf and the two women, singing as they did so, now proceeded to unroll the pipe from its coverings, which were four in number, the outside one being of red stroud and the others ordinary calico. Outside of each cover was wound a long strand of buckskin, painted red. Singing ceased long before the unwrapping was finished. At 1:10, rattles and songs were renewed, but a man from the number sitting in the house brought a common pipe ready for lighting and kneeled in a most solemn manner in front of R Wolf and presented it to him. The latter dropped his rattles and took the pipe. When the singing ceased, he held the pipe with stem to the altar and made a long prayer, at the conclusion of which all responded and the pipe was handed back to the still kneeling man who returned with it to the other men, who at once lit it and passed it around to all the men. 781 796 778 276 [782]

This pipe had a stem too long for one man to light and smoke at the same time. One man applied the match, while another used the mouthpiece. [This is the proper way of lighting a pipe, even if it has a short stem. One man has the duty of "cutting the tobacco." He sits before the cutting board, mixes the smoking herbs, fills the pipe, and lights it for the first smoker.] A three-pound [a carrot, or bundle of rolled and twisted tobacco leaves] of tobacco was now divided into many pieces by the two squaws above mentioned and a portion given to each person present. The women near the door now busied themselves with serving out stewed tongues into many little pans and bowls; each singer held up a rattle while Running Wolf sang, and Moon prayed loudly 7 times. Each man and woman present was handed a single dried sarvisberry which was held waiting for the proper time to eat it. R Wolf in next song held his berry to the altar and then put it in his mouth, all doing likewise. At once he and the other musicians took up one rattle each and poked it with fingers of other hand at same time 796 778 264 [533] [782] [262] [533] [825]

[Beaver Bundle Ceremony]

cawing like a crow. R Wolf then took a piece of meat from the stewed tongues, a dish of which had by that time been placed in front of each person, and after praying to the earth, shoved the meat between the cracks of the floor in front of him. All the others prayed and did likewise and the feast began. [Before we eat a ceremonial meal we always break off a piece of meat and hold it up toward the Spirits of the Universe, while giving a prayer of thanks. At the end of the prayer we say, "Oki, this piece is for you, Spirits of the Earth," thus symbolizing our request that our Earth Mother share her food with us.] 796 778 264 [533] [825] [782]

Singing was renewed at 1:40. Two little sacks containing red and black paint were taken from the outfit, and R Wolf extracted a particle of the Red Paint and held it towards the altar as he sang. Next he put a small bunch of wool in left hand, poised the paint with right, and finally placed paint with the wool rolled both together and deposited them upon the altar. The same was done with the black paint, after which the squaws painted a child's face red and black. One of the men present (Cut Face) brought his child, a boy, and kneeled in front of R Wolf, laid a dollar bill at the latter's feet and waited while the child's face was painted as follows. Running Wolf continued singing with the other musicians who all rattled; covering the palms of both hands with a mixture of red paint and grease, after many waves to and from the altar, he applied the paint all over the face of the now kicking and struggling child who tried in vain to free himself from the grasp of his father who held him throughout. At the end of his process Running Wolf made a long prayer and then rubbed the stuff off his hands. 796 778 302 852 [533] [386] [782]

Renewing his singing, he mixed the black in same way and after striping the boy's face [painting a black stripe over the red paint], indulged in a 2nd elaborate prayer; he also painted a black ring around each wrist. The striping of the face consisted in a single black stripe down the middle of the face from forehead, at base of hair, to chin, [782]

[Beaver Bundle Ceremony]

quite still with eyes closed searching his mind for the tune. I saw him in this perplexity cause an old man to bring a coal of fire to the altar upon which he [Running Wolf] made incense and then passed his hands through the smoke and to his head. . . . After a delay of 5 minutes his wife found the song and hummed it for him, at which he at once remembered it all and went on. . . . He and 3 Bulls took the floor dancing and whistling; one holding a pipe-stem, the other a buffalo's tail. These articles they would exchange with each other from time to time throughout the dance. They danced around to the altar and finished by handing the pipe-stem to 2 Bulls, who put it to his lips and prayed and then handed it to R Wolf. . . . And thus it was passed around the house from right to left, each person as he or she received it prayed with the mouthpiece to the lips. It took 20 minutes to complete this circle, the music was renewed as soon as the pipe reached the women, at end of which incense was made again. When the pipe-stem returned to the woman who had started it, she gave up a long prayer and laid it in its place.

Many of the Indians prayed at me although not to me of course; they wished their diety to give me a better heart, to make me more liberal; some prayed that they and I should always be as good friends as in the past. R Wolf held up the front of the hide covering the bundle to hide his actions from view and soon the sound of a bull keeping time with the rattles was heard. At 3:30 R Wolf, after 10 minutes of antics such as poking up the nose or head of the animal, exposed the article he had been hiding, which was a large otter skin decorated with a scalp tied to the nose, and bells upon the legs. The head was only stuffed. This object he lifted up and rising to his feet danced around the room to the women and handed it to them. She prayed as usual and set it in place. Running Wolf returned and went through the same performance with a large dried Beaver skin with tail and claws on.

During the next song the two women got

796 778 [533] [535] [276] [237] [782] [782] [782] [825] [237] [531] [534] [782] [237] 000

[p.95-B]

[Beaver Bundle Ceremony]

During the next song the two women got down upon their knees and Running Wolf's wife, dancing in that position, held her blanket in such a way as to catch one of her husband's rattles which he threw into it, at which the squaws both took to their feet and danced around the room. At 3:45, soda biscuits were passed around to the men; like all the food, this was sent around the room in the course of the sun, that which reached those men sitting near the entrance made a complete circuit. As usual a small bit was broken off a biscuit by each man and put upon the ground with a short prayer, but in this case it was done by the singers only. The women were also helped to biscuits, and Moon's wife alone made offering to the earth and prayed a lot of nonsense "at me." Running Wolf exhibited a duck skin, and holding it up, he sang 4 songs, ending each with an imitation of a Duck's call; the rattles were not used during those 4 songs. 4 squaws and Running Wolf got down on their knees and with their hands and arms over their heads, resembling antlers, they made gestures of deer, while dancing in front of the altar; at the end of each song, they turned about without altering their body configuration; all got up at the end of the fourth song.

In the following, Running Wolf's wife took a large beaver skin, and placing it on her back, she danced around; three women followed suit. . . . These hides were several times changed about among the 4 women who danced completely around the room several times, imitating the motions of beaver. . . .

At 4:20 incense was made; the assistant who brought the coal of fire for the altar, this time accidentally dropt it on the floor half way between the fire and altar; it was brushed to one side and a fresh one obtained. 3 Bulls, I noticed, all day was chewing the bark of red willow, which he bit from willow sticks he had. The fossil songs were now commenced, during which a fossil [an Iniskim] was produced by Running Wolf from the outfit. At end of one song he held it to his lips and prayed. . . . Incense. . . . The fossil was

796 778 [535] [262] [264] [782] [237] [533] [825] [535] [535] [237] [824] [533] [782]

[Beaver Bundle Ceremony]

passed around and prayed to by all. . . . Incense 796
. . . . The common pipe was filled and handed to 778
Front Horn who pointed the stem to the Sun [782]
and made an elaborate prayer. . . . Incense. . . .
Then came a song in which the rattles were used [533]
in a different manner. Each musician held up one [534]
above his head at arms length, shaking to keep [825]
time; then, all were lowered with handles touch-
ing the floor and the cawing of crows imitated.
Incense. . . . The event next in order was a feast [252]
of boiled rice which was handed around and [262]
eaten without prayers or offering [because it did
not represent a traditional food]. . . . Incense
. . . numerous songs and prayers. . . . Tea was [272]
given out in cups, bowls, and tin pans; the squaws [415]
continued dancing. A rattle, made by stringing a 796
number of buffalo toes to a stick by means of 778
holes bored in the points of the toes and leather 535
streamers through the holes, was thrown by Run- [534]
ning Wolf into the lap of one of the dancing [237]
women. The dancer was free to throw it to any-
one, who then must get up and dance with it,
and, in turn, throw it to some other person, al-
ways of the opposite sex. The woman threw it to
"Moon," who got up, and after dancing around a
few times, threw it to Running Wolf's wife, who
responded and danced near me and threw the
rattle to me. Not caring to join the festivities to
such an extent, I threw it to an Indian near me,
who took the floor and threw the rattle to the
woman who had it first, who, in turn, deposited it
on the knees of Spotted Bull, who was still danc-
ing with it when music stopped, which seemed to
cause much merriment. Incense 7:25. Song and 796
prayer by R Wolf. More songs and dance by 778
woman. Each rattler, holding up a single rattle, all [533]
sang the closing songs from 7:30 to 7:35. Two [535]
women faced the door and danced during these
songs; at the 4th part, the door was thrown open [534]
and they danced out. The musicians knocked
rattles together in the air to close off the last song.

[p. 96-B]

me. He was very attached to me from the time I was born. I probably had an infant's name, but I don't know what it was. 551 553

"One time, that little boy came running into our lodge because he heard my crying. He looked at me and he said, 'That little child is very cute. He looks just like an atsisi.' Those are the birds that make their homes in the ground on the prairie. Some kinds stay in the woods, but this kind stays on the prairie; and we call it a prairie owl. 551 553 8250

"Those Atsisi are really cute. They are really small. If a person sees them, they look like an owl. They have big eyes, but they are small, about the size of a pigeon, at the largest. Long ago, an Old Man said not to kill them. He said, 'If you call them they will listen to you and you will be able to pick them up and you can look at them.' And that's true—I know—when you see one you just call to it, *At-see-tsee, at-see-tsee,* and you go toward it, slowly. It will just look at you. *At-see-tsee, at-see-tsee*; you don't hurry it, you just go slowly. You go easy. *At-see-tsee.* You wear a glove to pick them up. That's why they're called *atsitsi* ["glove"].

"Oki, so that boy said, 'He looks like an atsitsi,' and they added *ninna* [man] to make it *Atsitsi-na.* My brother [the boy who gave him the name; cousins are called brothers among the Blackfeet], he was Little Buttocks. Later he became On-the-Edge-Piegan. He's been dead for a long time. I became well known as Atsitsina, and they are still calling me by that name." 551 553 [601]

SMOKING PIPES

Atsitsina usually sang our Bundle's songs whenever he visited us, but this time he was afraid his familiar voice could be easily heard around the early-morning camp. He asked that we postpone the songs and help him with a task. 533 778 576 123

"I came to ask, could you put a hole through this pipestem? I must make some pipes. Some of 276 575

[p. 106-B]

[Motokiks Society Dance, 1905]

are covered over the crowns with a mass of soft bird feathers. They have tail pieces falling down on the shoulders and bearing transverse rows of small wing and tail feathers. . . . The scabby bulls wear war bonnets with horns and robes of cowskin, hair side out. They dance in single file, circling the Pole. First they rise and dance in their tracks, then move to the south side of the fire and dance, then to the west and then to the north. Next the snake bonnets rise with the tipi pole owner in the lead and dance in the same way. Next come the feather bonnets and finally the buffalo wool bonnets. 575 796 535 [292] [237]

It is customary for persons who have made vows or pledges during the year, if their prayers be granted, to provide a feast of berry soup for the ma'toki. At various times during the ceremonies a pledger brings in a kettle of soup and some tobacco which is offered to the tipi pole owner with an announcement of the circumstances. Then the soup is dished out to the members and each and all pray for the pledger. 575 796 782 [262] [264]

On the morning of the last day, before sunrise, the ma'toki forms in procession and imitates buffalo going to water. They seek out some depression or low place in the prairie. As they drift along they segregate, as they do in the dance. At a place designated by the leader they all lie down like buffalo. 575 796 [825]

Now, it is customary for a man or a boy to have made a vow that he will "drive in the ma'toki" at their next ceremony. His sacrifice must be a horse and many presents to the owner of the tipi pole. This man then rides out as if looking for a buffalo. When he finds them, he builds a fire with cow dung to windward. As soon as the ma'toki smell the smoke, they rise. The driver then mounts and rides toward them, at which they start for their shelter. As they proceed, he rides on their flank. They trot to the shelter, but the four scabby bulls trail slowly in the rear. When the members get inside the shelter they run around the inside sun-wise until one by one [782]

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 119-A]
[P. 115-B]

keep the sacred objects bundled up so that their spiritual powers will only be used in the proper sacred way. 778

The main object in every Medicine Pipe Bundle is the sacred Stem. Like exceptionally long regular pipestems, they have a straight hole beginning at the carved mouthpiece and ending at the carved bowl-fitting. Sacred Pipes are very handsomely decorated, with many black-and-white ermine tails, black-and-white eagle feathers, eagle plumes, other feathers, and beads, bells, and porcupine quills. They are kept in long, tubular cases of red, blue, or black wool stroud cloth, the kind with the white selvedges brought to our People by traders of the long-ago. These cloth covers replaced the original buckskin covers as they wore out. 779 276 [531] [237] [415]

Spiritually, the sacred Stems represent all the Holy Powers of the Universe. They were first given by Thunder, who embodies the rain-water that helps to make everything grow. The wood stems represent all the plants that grow upon Earth; the eagle tailfeathers represent all the Above Powers, including all the birds, the eagle being the most Powerful among them; the ermine skins stand for all the Below Powers, including the animals that walk on Earth; and the beads and bells symbolize all the goodness and beauty of the Universe. The sacred Stems are attached to stone bowls that represent the strength of our Earth Mother. Her Spirit travels in the form of smoke along the long and straight path of the sacred Stem, into the body of the smoker, and as he exhales it, up into the air that flows throughout the Universe. The physical appearance of a sacred Pipe represents all the holy beauty that can be found if one lives by its holy Ways. 778 776 276 824 825 [823]

No one knows exactly how many sacred Pipes were made among our People throughout the ages, but there were probably no more than a few dozen. Shortly after 1900, Clark Wissler made an extensive study and concluded that there were "something more than seventeen" Medicine 778 276

Pipes among all four divisions of our People. 778
Since there were almost that many remaining 276
among all our People less than twenty years ago, his estimate may be low. But it does give some idea of how many there were among a tribe of over ten thousand registered members. Today there are twelve Medicine Pipes left on the four reserves of our People.

The sacred Stem constitutes the "main" Pipe in a Bundle. There is also another long Pipestem, which we call the secondary Pipe. This second Stem is not included in all the Bundles, and its original purpose has been forgotten. Its stem is flat, not round like the main Pipe's, and it is only sparsely decorated. It is kept in a cloth cover simi- [415]
lar to the one for the main Pipe. These two sacred Stems are like father and mother to the other contents in the Bundles.

The skins of birds and animals vary according [787]
to the origins and later dreams accompanying each Bundle. Each skin represents not only its own species but also that element of nature in which it lives most successfully; this is usually mentioned in the song for that bird or animal.

Every Medicine Pipe Bundle contains the 778
skin of an owl, representing night. Owls have the 825 •
Power to succeed then, when others are handi- 237
capped. Another important skin is that of the loon, which represents the element of water. The loon has the Power of Water, where it swims and finds its food and raises its children. The skins of hawks and eagles are important because they represent the element of air, the Power to fly in the sky. The skins of antelopes and deer symbolize the element of Earth and the Power to live on the prairies and in the forests. The skin of a marmot stands for the Power to live in the high mountains; the squirrel, the Power to live in open land. A rattle of buffalo hide represents the Power of [539]
the Old People's most important source of food. Dried berries (served in a sacred soup during the [824]
Thunder ceremony) are testaments of the Powers of plants, as well as another of our Old People's

source of food. A whistle makes the sounds for the winds and all the birds that fly in the air. Pouches of sacred Earth paints represent our Earth Mother. Sweet pine needles, used for incense, speak for all that is sweet and holy. The tanned elk hide wrapped around the Bundle testifies to the majesty of that animal. The tanned skin of a black bear, wrapped around the elk hide, represents the physical power of bears and gives the Bundle strength and protection. A plaid shawl draped over all of these things gives the Bundle privacy and symbolizes the Power of the changes that have come to our Old Ways.

Sacred Pipes are smoked only during Medicine Lodge ceremonies, and not at any other time —not even during Medicine Pipe Bundle-Opening ceremonies. When taken out of their Bundles, they are not smoked but danced with. Dancing is so important that many refer to our Medicine Pipe ceremonies by the Blackfoot term *Ninamska-Paskan*—Medicine Pipe Dance.

In the Old Days, when the People lived together in lodges, the Medicine Pipe Bundle was opened on the first day Thunder was heard in the spring. When this happened and it was confirmed in the home of a Bundle Owner that the opening ceremony would be held, the wife immediately began preparing the berry soup. Owner and wife would then change into their best dress and straighten out their lodge, which soon filled with relatives, friends, and all nearby Medicine Pipe People. If the Owner was not properly educated to open his own Bundle, he asked a former Owner to lead the ceremony.

Each Bundle had its own group of followers. Those who formerly owned the Bundle always attended all its ceremonies. Close relatives of the present Owner came, and the ones who helped with the transfer payments were given spiritual rights to parts of the Bundle. Others came because they were interested in the special Powers of the Bundle.

In the Old Days, members of a band trans-

[Medicine Pipe Transfer Ceremony, 1890's]

four times], then gives the articles to host as before. Sometimes 2 or 3 will be on the floor at same time. One may have owl, or rattle alone; they can suit themselves and take whatever they like. [Not exactly. Past and present Medicine Pipe Owners may select anything from the Bundle, but some persons who have never owned a Bundle may have had the rights to certain objects within a Bundle transferred to them. They can then always dance with those objects but not with any other.] When using the whistle they begin at a high note and descend the scale with a continuous toot, toot, toot. 796 432 778 535 [422] [533] [534]

In making the first three feints to take the pipe, the dancer often retreats, dancing back around the lodge making the sign to kill (as if stabbing with a knife). [This preliminary dancing Wilson describes is no longer done at all. Today, when a man gets up to dance he takes the selected object, prays, and dances four times.] They nearly all dance the same step in this ceremony, a slow, regular, vigorous jump with both of the knees bent; the tunes and songs used upon these occasions are not sung at any other time; the step in dancing is also peculiar to Calumet [Pipe] men. There is a preference shown for the owl, which is most often taken up and almost always prayed to by the dancer as he takes it in his hands, or the host when it is handed back to him. [According to our traditions, the dead come back to visit the living in the bodies of owls. For that reason owls are respected as being very Powerful, and many participants desire the spiritual strength they get by dancing with one.] At one of these dances, while one of the dancers had the owl in his hands, I was amused to see a claw and leg of the bird fall to the ground, at which all present put on a very long face, thinking it a bad omen, and it is a strange fact that the owner of the pipe and host on that occasion died before the summer was out, his Calumet was buried with him, the stems lying on his breast. [Any accident that occurs during a sacred ceremony is con- [201] [178] [825] [775] 796 432 778 787

monial raising of sacred tobacco. After our People settled on the Blood Reserve, however, they soon learned to raise potatoes, turnips, carrots, and some other vegetables. Before that, vegetable foods had been used only for a change in diet, or as an addition to our Old People's basic diet of meat.

None of our People today were raised without such products as flour, tea, and sugar. But over the past fifty years their basic diets have changed tremendously, from natural meats and vegetables to commercial beef and many starches, fats, and sweets. According to the Old People, bodies were much stronger in the Old Days. The Old Man, as a doctor, had this view of the diet changes among our People:

When I was young I was taught that the good foods were meat and berries. My parents were just learning to raise a garden when I was born, so they didn't know much about the white man's vegetables. The meat we had came from animals that ate nothing but natural growths and water. Even our cattle lived just as though they were wild. Today our meat often comes from animals that are fed white man's invented foods, and they are given strange materials through injections with needles. Even their manure often does not smell natural. In the past, all the animals we ate just lived on grass and plants and water—all that was clean. We used to eat our meat with plenty of fat on it. That gave us the strength to

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 181B]
[p. 180-B]

once used to decorate buckskin clothing, before traders brought glass beads to our People. Berries, too, were often strung to make necklaces and wristlets. They were made in this way: A fire was started with dry wood, then grease was dropped on the wood. The necklaces and wristlets were held in the greasy smoke until they were covered with an even layer of dark grease. Then they were polished with a soft piece of buckskin to a very pleasant finish. 824 [531] [301]

Berry stones were also placed inside rawhide rattles. [534]

DYES were made from a number of plants: owl clover made red; violet flowers made blue; some lichens were used to make green; and the roots of the Oregon grape, yellow. [386]

Plants also provided stuffing for pillows and saddles, and carpeting inside of tipis. Uses for their various woods ranged from fire fuel and holding up lodge covers to making bows, arrows, and traps.

BIRDS AND ANIMALS

Because the Old People lived their days with the birds and animals, the names they called them generally summarized an outstanding trait or characteristic. Some birds and animals are named for their similarity to others, often indicated by the prefix *big*. 825

This first list concerns the names of birds.

BIRD: The general word for bird is *piksi*, although the exact meaning has been lost. Small birds are *sistsi*; very small birds are *poksistsi*. 825

EAGLE: There are two kinds, the golden eagle and the bald-headed eagle. *Pitai* designates the golden eagle; *ksikichkinni*, or "white head," the bald eagle.

HAWK: The hawks as a group are *aiinnimaiaks*, or "scizers." The large rough-legged

[p.189-B]

825

hawk is *ishpochsoatsis*, or "used as a tail-feather," because its tailfeathers resemble the larger ones of the golden eagle and were used at the back of headdresses when there were not enough real eagle feathers. Hawk skin was included in Medicine Pipe Bundles, along with the skins of the various eagles. This hawk is also called "little eagle" and is sometimes mistaken by hunters for a real eagle. [237]

The small sparrow hawk is known by the ancient *pispski*, which means something like "very high"; the sharp-shinned hawk is "big pispsksi"; the swainson's hawk, *sikpuitapanikim*, or "dark greasy feathers"; the red-tail hawk, *otachkuisoatsis*, or "yellow tail-feathers." The osprey is known as *pachtsiksistsikum*, or "mistaken for thunder," because of the noise its feathers make when diving.

OWL: *Sepisto*, or "night crier." The large horned owl is *kakanotstoki*, or "hollow ear," an important part of Medicine Pipe Bundles. The long-eared owl is *pachtsisepisto*, or "mistaken for owl," because it looks like a small horned owl. The burrowing owl is *matasi*, or "hollowed-out rectum," because of the shape of its nesting holes.

SWAN: *Ksikomachkaii*, or "white going home," it was usually seen only when it was migrating.

COOSE: *Apspini*, or "white cheeks"; the snow goose is *einochksikanikim*, or "dark-tipped feathers."

DUCK: *Meksikatsi*, or "red feet." The larger ducks have the name prefixed with "big," and the small ducks with "little"; ducks such as the merganser that remain in our country far into the winter are called *miseeh*; the first syllable means "hardy," while *seeh* is another general term for ducks.

PELICAN: *Sochkaukomi*, or "big throat."

GREBE: *Miksksistaii*, or "fine diver," because

[p. 190-A]

it could go under water; its skin was common in Medicine Pipe Bundles. 825

LOON: *Matsiisaipi*, or "handsome charger," because when it skimmed across water, it reminded our Old People of a proud warrior charging into battle; the loon is the second most important bird in Medicine Pipe Bundles, after the owl.

CROW: *Maisto* is its Indian name, but the origin has been lost.

RAVEN: *Omachkaisto*, or "big crow," which the Old People considered the wisest of birds. Men on the war or hunting trail always looked for and followed it because success was sure to await the party in the direction the raven flew. Two restless ravens in the path of a war party indicated enemies ahead. A raven circling slowly over a camp meant that some news was forthcoming. [787]

WOODPECKER: *Pachpakskskissi*, or "pounding its nose." The red-headed woodpecker, whose cry is said to sound like the Blackfoot expression "stick your heads out so that I can eat you," is *mikimita*, which means "fire-reddened breast," or *ekotsotokan*, which means "red head." Lewis's woodpecker is known as "big mikimita." The pileolated woodpecker is called *sikskikunnikesuyi*, said to mean "flashes black feathers," although the term also suggests flashing something more vulgar than feathers.

MAGPIE: *Mamiatskikim*, or "has a body like a fish," because of its long tail. Its cry resembles a slumber song old women sing for little children: "Long tails—fly ahead and stab your provision bag at my door." It refers to the way they stab their beaks at whatever they can find. [533]

CATBIRD: *Pokah*, or "child," because its cry resembles a baby calling *Na-ah*, or "Mama."

MEADOWLARK: *Otachkuikaii*, or "yellow breast." To the Old People, spring arrived at the first sign of a meadowlark. They [821] [787]

[p 190-B]

also believed the presence of meadowlarks to mean that all was well in the camp. 825 [787]

KINGBIRD: *Sikiminiwanyeh*, or "Stingy with berries," it makes a great ruckus if anyone picks berries where it is feeding.

WATER OUZEL: *Iksisakum*, or "meat"; it will dip its head in response to hearing its name called aloud.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN JAY: *Apiakunski*, or "white forehead."

STELLER'S JAY: *Omachkutskuisistsi*, or "big blue bird."

WAXWING: *Simitsima*, or "main lodge pole," for the pointed crest on its head.

DOVE: *Kuko*, referring to the domestic pigeon; the old-time Kukoiks Society members are called Doves or Pigeons.

GROUSE: *Kitoki*, or "prairie chicken"; the sage hen is "big kitoki" and the ptarmigan is "white kitoki." Grouse are also called *kitssitsum*, or "looking like smoke." The Franklin grouse is called the *matsapsi*, or crazy kitssitsum, because it is so stupid it can be approached and killed with a stick. Another grouse is called *apaskau*, or dancing kitssitsum, because of its mating dance.

The long-ago names of other birds have been forgotten. In the old days, only devoted Beaver Men and Medicine Pipe Keepers knew more than the names of the most common birds. Because so many birds are hard to approach, most of our People could only give general identifications of many species, and therefore the birds were named by their most obvious characteristics—big, small, blue, yellow, and so on. 825 [184]

Before our list of Blackfoot animal names, I would like to explain a little about our relationship to those animals around us. 182 825 224

Until the coming of trappers and traders, our People rarely killed anything they could not 178

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use. Buffalo and deer were hunted for meat, hides, and other parts. Fur-bearing animals were hunted and trapped with snares and deadfalls for their skins, which were used for clothing and sacred articles. They were seldom eaten. Animals and birds that spent most or all of their time in water were almost never eaten. Spiritually, they were thought to belong to the *SoyeTuppi*, the Underwater People. Fish were never eaten, except by a few. Before entering any body of water, most people gave an offering of tobacco or beads in recognition of the Powers of Water.

Even back when our People lived in harmony with nature, it could not be said that they never wasted anything. A spiritual person offered to Sun whatever he could not use of his kill. Men on war parties often shot buffalo for food, but could not eat or take back home most of the animal. When our People drove buffalo over cliffs, the ancient manner of hunting that was used until around 1850, they killed many more buffalo than necessary. About that time, buffalo were killed more for their hides than for food. Even our own People began trading buffalo hides and furs they had trapped for goods at the trading post. Thus began the end of our way of life.

Compiling the following list of Indian names and identifying their meanings was difficult, as the Blackfoot language has changed a great deal since the Old Days. Word definitions varied depending on precisely how a person was taught to use the word. In each case I have chosen the definition most often given, or the Old Man's definition.

DOG: *Imitai*; its meaning has been lost. Before horses, dogs were used to pack loads and move camps. The dog of the Old Days looked like a large gray wolf and could drag up to seventy-five pounds on a travois. The average family had about twelve dogs; there were several hundred in a camp. At times they could be quite unmanageable; they

would fight, chase wild animals, or run into water, even when loaded with packs and travois. 231 825

HORSE: The first horses our Old People saw resembled elks but were used like dogs. Thus the name *ponokamitai*, or "elk dog." Horses first came to the Bloods from neighboring tribes sometime around 1750, before the Bloods had seen their first white man. By a century later, our People's whole way of life had changed. By then they owned about eight horses per lodge. Our head chief, Pinukwiim, owned about a hundred horses before his death in 1870. Many horse-poor people borrowed some from the chief to pack their belongings whenever camp was moved. [439] [178] [492]

The original horse we used was known as the "Indian pony." It is now almost extinct due to the government's efforts to interbreed it with the larger "white man's horses," more practical for farm and ranch use. Compared with today's horses, the old pony was smaller and better suited for rough traveling, requiring little food and water.

Horses, like dogs, were eaten only in times of great hunger. Their hides were popular for drumheads. [261] [237]

BUFFALO: *Einiua*, the most important source of food for our Old People. The name is said to refer to the animal's black horns. Spiritually, buffalo are still very important, although their scarcity has made it necessary to substitute beef in most ceremonies. Hides and dried meat, however, are occasionally available. [534] 825

ELK: *Ponokau* refers to the animal's long legs. Elk were so commonplace in the Old Days, our Old People easily hunted them whenever buffalo herds could not be found. All parts of the elk were used.

Tanned elk hides made robes that holy women wore throughout the hot summer days of the Medicine Lodge ceremony. 292 237

[p. 192-A]

Skinned elk heads or leg hides were sewn together as berry bags. The long, smooth elk ribs made excellent runners for children's sleds. An elk's canine teeth, easy to remove because they do not grow into the jawbone, were highly valued decorations for women's dresses, men's vests, and necklaces. They are still valuable today.

A delicacy among our People was elk's rectum. Unlike many other animals, the elk has a very clean rectum. Before cooking, it was washed and stuffed with serviceberries and fat. Then the top ashes in the fireplace were scraped away and the stuffed rectum placed over the bottom layer of coals. When the top ashes were replaced, a small fire was built over the ashes. The man of the household would invite distinguished guests to share the delicacy with him. The end was cut off and given to the dogs; the rest was sliced up into small pieces for the People. This greasy, sweet, and spicy delicacy was considered "a meal for a chief."

MOOSE: *Sixtsi-sou.* The first part of the name refers to the animal's basic black color; the second part connotes "coming through," referring to the moose's characteristic charge, even through brush and trees, when disturbed or angry. Our Old People did not often venture into country where moose were found.

Moose nose was another culinary delicacy. In addition, large moose antlers were used to make bowls, and emergency moccasins could be fashioned from the peeled-off skin of moose hocks.

MULE DEER: *Is-sikotuye,* or "black-tipped tail."

WHITE-TAILED DEER: *Auwah-tuye,* or "waving the tail from side to side." This ancient name originally meant something like "waving their tails like dogs."

CARIBOU: *Omach-tsistsini,* or "big hoof." It

was rarely seen by our People, and then only in the mountains. 825

MOUNTAIN SHEEP: *Mistaks-omach-kskinnae*, meaning "mountain big horn." *Omach-kskinna* refers to domestic sheep, as well.

MOUNTAIN GOAT: *Ap-omach-kskinnae*, meaning "white big horn" or "white sheep."

ANTELOPE: *Saki-auwakahsi*, or "prairie deer." The name connotes shuffling or trotting out on the prairie. This animal, fast and difficult to hunt, was very common in the country of our Old People.

GRIZZLY BEAR: *Omach-ku-kyaio*, or "big bear." Bears in general are *kyaio*, referring to the head and neck. Their Powers, especially that of the grizzly bear, were feared by our People; only the bravest men would hunt or attempt to kill such an animal. In the past, bear was never eaten and bear skins were never used for anything except religious purposes. Hunters gave the skins as offerings to [782] the Holy Powers, and proudly wore the claws [301] around their necks. Medicine Pipe Owners [237] will never say the animal's name, nor will they touch any part of it, except for the black bear skin in their Bundle.

BLACK BEAR: *Sikoch-kyaio*, which means "black bear."

BROWN BEAR: *Apoch-kyaio*, which means "brown bear."

TIMBER WOLF: *Omachka-apeesee*, or "big wolf." The general name is *makwi*, which connotes one who gets and eats plenty. Another name for wolf is *apeesee*, suggesting that they are wild relations to dogs. *Makwi* refers specifically to wolves, while *apeesee* also refers to bush wolves, technically considered coyotes.

COYOTE: *Ksino-au*, which refers to the way they can sneak around without being seen. This name is mainly for the small prairie coyote.

BOBCAT: *Atayo*, which refers to the bobcat's

21: Hungry Wolf F-4,5 (ca. 1972) 1977
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

scream; it was also known as *suapit*, or "fringes on the legs." [825]

LYNX: *Sok-atayo*, or "heavy bobcat."

MOUNTAIN LION: *Omachk-atayo*, or "big bobcat."

KIT FOX: *Sinopah*, which means something like "he has arrows"; it suggests the fox's ability to strike swiftly and unexpectedly.

RED FOX: *Otatoye*; means something like "distant Medicine robe," referring to the ancient custom of using a red fox skin in place of cloth when making an offering to Sun. [782]

WOLVERINE: *Issistsi*; means either "claws shaped like hooves" or "carrying its young."

FISHER: *Pinutuye*; refers to the way the hair on its tail stands straight out, as though it had been clipped.

OTTER: *Emonissi*; refers to the way it slides around and is difficult to approach when it is on land.

BEAVER: *Ksisstukki*; means something like "cutting trees with his teeth." Beaver skins are tanned, complete with tails; the fat is removed and the tails are stuffed with crushed perfume plants and sewn shut. Beaver skins were commonly worn for winter clothing, especially leggings, with the hair outside to repel snow and water. Large beaver skins made popular saddle blankets. Some people made necklaces with the front teeth, and the claws from the hind feet were strung as wristlets. Beaver bile was placed on wounds that would not heal. Beaver castor made a popular perfume, among our People as well as many others. [237] [281] [291] [492] [301] [237] [752] [303]

MUSKRAT: *Misochpski*, or "hard-puffed face."

MARTEN: *Asinnatuye*, which means something like "young cropped tail" or "young fisher."

WEASEL: *Otao* is the summer weasel, referring to its brown coat. The winter weasel, or ermine, is called *Apao*, referring to its white coat. The winter skin is symbolic of life and

[p.193-B]

death, day and night, and good and bad. For that reason it was favored for decorating all sorts of things. Our people tended to use these skins in place of the black and white eagle feathers used by other tribes. 825

Ermines were snared with sinew loops. The skin, simply peeled off the body, was stretched with willow sticks, and left to dry that way. The skin was "tanned" by rubbing it vigorously between the hands until it was soft. [224] [281]

BLACKFOOT FERRET: *Omachik-apao*, or "big weasel," so called because it was similar to ermine.

MINK: *Soyekaye*, meaning something like "wet back" or "water on its back."

SKUNK: *Apikayi*, or "white along its back." One way the Old People got skunks not to spray was to smoke them out of hiding places with a fire covered with plenty of sage. The smoke was said to blind the animal and confuse its sense of smell, so that it could be quickly dispatched with a club. [229]

RACCOON: *Siksikishzip-otatoye*, or "black-striped red fox."

BADGER: *Misinskiyo*, meaning something like "sharply-pointed nose."

PORCUPINE: *Kaiskachp*, referring to the way the porcupine bristles its quills when threatened. Porcupines served as an emergency food, especially for men on the warpath who had lost their weapons. Since porcupines do not run away they could be clubbed with a stick. The tails would be skinned and resewn over a thick stick. As the skin dried, it tightened around the stick. A piece of buckskin was sewn over the tail in a way that left the tip protruding. When this tip was evenly trimmed, it could be made into a hairbrush or doctor's instrument. Sore muscles and joints were treated with rapid up-and-down stabs of the hairbrush. This did not puncture the skin, but stimulated the sore area. [261] [224] [237] [412] [413] [157]

[p.194-A]

825

JACKRABBIT: *Ahtsista*, the common name for all rabbits; it refers to the way the animal crouches down with its hind end.

SNOWSHOE RABBIT: *Mistaki-ahtsista*, or "mountain rabbit."

COTTONTAIL RABBIT: *Sik-ahtsista*, or "black rabbit."

224

PRAIRIE DOG: *Omachk-okatta*. The first part means "big"; the second refers to the way these animals were captured by children. A loop of sinew laid over the animal's hole snared it when it stuck its head out. The same name now also refers to gophers.

MARMOT: *Omachk-sikitsis-omachk-okatta*, meaning something like "big-toothed, big-snared."

MOUSE: *Kahnesskiena*, meaning something like "old face."

WOOD RAT: *Omachs-kahnesskiena*, or "big mouse."

SHREW: *Pokak-kaisksisi-kahnesskiena*, or "small, long-pointed-nosed mouse."

CHIPMUNK: *Miatsikaye*, or "striped back."

SQUIRREL: *Eekaiiseah*, referring to the animal's warning cry.

FLYING SQUIRREL: *Apastoksi-eekaiiseah*, or "white-faced squirrel."

BAT: *Motaienstami*, meaning something like "owner of many lodge poles." When a bat's wings are spread out, they look like lodge covers with many lodge poles, or small bones, underneath.

SEASONS AND STARS

905

The way in which our Old People kept track of the changing times was a reflection of their life in harmony with nature. They considered the year to be divided into two seasons--summer and winter. The year ended when summer was over, after the hunting and gathering of food supplies, sometimes around October or November. The new

TELLING FUTURE WEATHER

Our Old People had ways of foretelling weather conditions by observing the many signs of nature. An upcoming winter, a new spring, or even future events could be prepared for by making certain observations. 821

If muskrats built their houses close to shore, the People expected a mild winter, and if houses were built some distance from shore, they expected an average winter. If the muskrats built out toward the middle of a pond or slough, however, the People prepared for a tough winter. 821 825

If migrating geese were flying high, that was also a sign for a mild winter. If the geese flew low, the Old People would say, "The geese are close to the ground. We had better look for lots of supplies for the upcoming winter."

The pelts of animals were checked for thickness to learn how to prepare for winter; the thicker the pelts, the more severe the winter would be.

The color of rabbits indicated how soon winter would arrive and how soon it would be leaving. As winter approached, they would turn white; toward spring, they'd turn brown again.

Winter was expected to come early and strong if curlews stopped singing early in summer, if meadowlarks left the area before the berries got ripe, and if songbirds were seen gathering in flocks early.

During the winter, the People would watch for the spectacular northern lights, the aurora borealis. They believed the lights came from the "Woods White Men," who were having a dance. If the lights were bright, a big storm was expected within two days. If the lights were not very bright, a mild storm was expected, probably just a wind storm. 821

At the end of winter, the People watched gophers digging their holes. A lot of dirt outside the hole meant the gophers were digging deep 821 825

and that the grass would not grow very well. People then said the buffalo flowers would not grow tall and the buffalo would not be fat. Buffalo were said to get good and fat on the buffalo flowers. 821 825

When Sun paints both of his cheeks (when two Sun Dogs, or halos, show) the weather will turn very bad. When Sun paints his forehead and his chin as well as his cheeks (four Sun Dogs), it is a sign that a great man is going to die. 821 [763]

A rainbow during a storm meant that Thunder was roping the rain clouds and taking them somewhere else, so that the storm would soon be over.

Today the Old People say that signs of nature are difficult to read because of the ways that man has changed nature around. Atsitsina gives this example:

Oki, I used to hear the Old People say that when Night Light [Moon] is lying on her back that she is resting and that the weather will be good. My father would say, "She is lying back like a bowl and holding in all the rain water. When she is finished resting, she will make it cold or rain again."

When Night Light is standing all the way up, the Old People will say that she is mad. You better dress warm because it is going to get cold.

Now it is all different. These white men, they are bad. They fly to the moon and they have moved it. All things have changed. The weather is not like it used to be. The things that my father taught to me don't always work right anymore because things change in strange ways. That is not how things were made to be. 821 829

THE SEVEN BROTHERS

Our Old People thought of stars as the spirits of legendary People, and the names they endowed them with suggest these origins. Most of these legends have been forgotten, but three are still quite well known. Two concern the two groups of 821 [532]

[p.200-A]

[Grass Dance]

raid and we used it for getting people up to dance. 535

A person will make a vow—it is very hard. A person will say, to get better or whatever, that he will eat a dog. We don't usually eat dogs. . . . 535 796 [782]

On the day of the dance a pup will be boiled. The dog is taken out with a special forked stick and an eagle feather is used for licking the dog. [262] [412]

The one that made the vow, he will provide all the food, just like at our Nighttime ceremonies. The dance hall will be filled with people. Eight people who will eat the dog will be sitting at the front. They will pray and count coups. Then the ceremony will begin. [782]

First, two handsome men will pick up the boiling kettle. . . . We will sing and the two men will dance around the circle four times. On the last time they will pick up the kettle and bring it to the front and set it down before the eight men. Everyone will watch very quietly. The dog will be really soft-boiled.

When the kettle is set down, the eight men will pray and make oaths that they are telling the truth. The first one who eats will eat the dog's head. It is the most Powerful. In the Old Days when we were really mad and we killed an enemy, we used to eat some part of him—that is what the Old People used to say. That is why we are called Blood Indians—we only quit when we are all bloody. . . . [626] [825] [266] [101]

If some of the younger men can't stand to eat any of the dog, they will ask an older man, "Will you eat this for me? I will give you a horse." They paid a good horse or other goods to have someone eat the dog meat for them. We will sing four times. Everyone will get up after each song and shout [a war yell]. They will raise one hand. After the second song they will raise both hands. Then they will take the dog out of the kettle. [431]

The last time I saw a Grass Dance, Mark Old Shoes was the dancer who picked the dog from the kettle. He stabbed the dog and danced four times around the pot before he picked it up. Some people will say they are Powerful and go and lick the dog. . . .

person on the reserve to let the cattle graze there. This practice began when Eagle Bear accepted the first four-dollar payment. That was in the year number 1904 when I was born. Small Priest [the People's name for Father Dusette] baptized me, but he didn't give me a name. I don't know why I wasn't called after my father, Dog Child. When I was not many days old, I was called First Rid. and I grew up with that name.

When I was a little bit old-personlike [when first active as a child], my father taught me to ride. This was during the number four winter of my life. There was still a lot of horseback riding then and a lot of travois for transportation. Very few had slim-wheelers [buggies]. I was tied on a horse, and the horse was tied to a picket. Sometimes I used to go to sleep on the horse. My mother made a pad saddle out of blue jeans and stuffed with big-head fur [sheep's wool]. There were stirrups at that time; I used to see them, they were made of wood. But my stirrups were rawhide thongs, which fit my young feet better.

I grew up in the land of the Men with Many Wives [Cardston, Alberta, is a Mormon town]. My father was a hunter and he had many rifles; a slim-gum-arrow [.30/30 caliber]; a double-barrelled hunting gun; also a Number 22, called a gopher rifle. And he was one of the first to own a Number 303 rifle [.303 caliber]. He set traps for coyote, beaver, and muskrat.

My father made me eat all kinds of deer. The People of the long-ago liked to eat the part of the mother animal that the baby animal sucked on. The only thing they didn't eat is the milk of the big white ? · ads [mountain sheep]. I heard that this milk is very bitter.

When I killed an elk, my father showed me they have seven nest lumps [nipples], not four or six or eight. He showed me that badgers have blood clots on their ribs. We sprinkled gun powder on the badger's blood and from looking at our reflection in the blood we knew how long we were going to live. My father saw from his

on the war trail in 1850, Red Crow was an active bachelor, subject to teasing from his friends and relatives.] When I returned from my visit to eastern Canada in 1885 I acquired my present and fourth name, Sitting White Buffalo. 159 551 553

My first war path was with a large party against the Cree. I did not capture anything, but many of the elder men did and returned home on their new horses. Those of us who captured nothing returned home, on foot, this being the custom. [Young men began to accompany war parties in their early teens. They often followed behind such parties for a day or two before letting their presence be known, lest they be sent back home. Once they joined the main group they were treated like servants, carrying the older men's belongings and pack water, and cooking the meals. They were seldom allowed to accompany the main party into enemy camps. Instead, they were made to wait at some distance, guarding the horses. It was not unusual for these beginners to be abandoned by the successful main party, who thought that the young men were in need of such experiences in order to learn the ways of adventure.] 159 721 982

Next Summer I made another attempt and was a little more fortunate, for although I captured nothing, I was presented with a horse by a relative who did.

As soon as we returned home I went off with a small party under Red Old Man of our band. Upon this, my third war path, which was against the Crows, I captured two animals, a buckskin mare and a pinto gelding.

Next summer after that I joined an immense party of Bloods, Sarcees, and Blackfeet under the Chief of the latter tribe, Sun Old Man [better known as Old Sun]. This party was mounted and our direction was North to the Cree Country. Near the Saskatchewan River we sighted three Cree hunters. Knowing they would run at sight of our large party, we hid ourselves in low ground 159 726 [825]

and some of our men turned the hair side of their Buffalo robes outwards and then went out on foot on a hill nearby and imitated the actions of buffalo. This trick succeeded, for the Cree hunters came for them and ran into the ambush. We all rushed and killed them easily, but not before one of our men got a bullet in his shoulder and another, Big Plume, a stab in the back with a broad dagger. Two of the Crees were armed with guns, which were captured by Bloods. 726 159 [825] 159 727

A Blackfoot took the bow and arrows of the other Cree. I contented myself with capturing a white Hudson's Bay Point Blanket, which [was] then very much prized, and relieved one of the dead Crees of his scalp.

Later that Summer I joined a small unmounted party going to raid the Crows under Morning Paper [or Morning Writing]. This party was so small that we only required one brush lodge at nights. [Men on the war path usually built simple lodges of brush for their sleeping quarters. Eight or ten men could sleep in one lodge. These lodges were usually well hidden, but located close to some lookout point where the members could take turns sitting and watching the enemy's movements. Some of these old brush shelters became landmarks and were used for many years.] 159 726 [342]

Upon our arrival in the country of the Crows our raid was bungled by a Blackfoot of our party. It happened in this way: One of the Crow Indians had a valuable horse, probably a racer, standing in a lodge, the front of which had been unlaced and spread out. The Blackfoot in our party saw this animal, and, knowing that none but a good horse would be cared for in that way, he desired it very much. The fearless fellow jumped on the horse's back thinking to cut him loose and boldly ride him out of camp. But the Crows were not to be deprived so easily of their favorite steed. Before the horse, up sprung Crow with gun in hand. Our Blackfoot, being as nimble as he was reckless, slipped off the horse and es-

On the Red Deer were pitched the lodges of the Bloods, Blackfoot, Piegans, and Sarcees. [The Sarsis were always allied with our People. A small tribe who would probably have been wiped out without this alliance, the Sarsis are from a different family of the People than the Blackfeet, and their language is not the same. Yet they adopted most of our culture, such as dress and ceremonies.] The Sarcees had lately suffered rather severely in war with the Crees; a favorite chief and many others had fallen. On an errand of revenge a very large party was organized under the Blood Bull Shakes His Tent. We set out, all mounted, and travelling Northwards at a place called Round Bushes or Round Timbers we saw a Cree camp in the distance. Some of our wild young men wanted to ride boldly and attack it, but we wiser ones told them that they would certainly be killed, for the distance was so great that if pursued, they would be overtaken before they could return to us. These young fellows attempted several times to go in spite of our advice, but I headed them off and made them wait and listen to reason. One of the chiefs called our attention to a road by which we could all ride almost unseen to within a short distance of our enemies' camp. We covered the fronts of our light-coloured horses with buffalo robes and made the party look like buffalo and walked our horses towards a hill between us and the camp. Several times we had to move through open prairie, but we walked slow like buffalo, lowering our heads and horses' necks. When we reached the hill, we all painted and made ready for action. Leading my horse, I crawled to the top of the hill where I saw the Cree men were away running buffalo. In the short distance between us and the camp were ten people who were returning with water to the village. There were two women on ahead, then six women and one mounted man, and a single woman bringing up the rear; 9 squaws and one man, all loaded with water kegs. As soon as I saw our party behind the hill mounting, I sprang on

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[648]
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[925]

party of them had ambushed a number of our [726]
hunters out after buffalo, on Yellow River. We
wondered if they were happy; contented. Black
Elk said that they probably had become Crows in
all but their blood. Had we not in our tribe Crow [727]
women, Snake women, Kutenai women, Cree
women, and women of the West-Side tribes,
whom our warriors had captured, and with their
children, plenty of food, good clothes, were they
not happy? Yes. They even said, many of them,
that they would rather die than return to their
own kind. And there was Painted Wing's woman,
Pine Tree Woman; she went with him to war
against her own People, the West-Side, River
People.

Said my younger helper, Wolf Plume: "I am [823]
so poor that none of the girls of our tribe will so
much as look at me, so I will try to capture one of
the girls down there. It is said that the Crow girls
are very beautiful."

"You will make no attempt of that kind this
night. You are to stand in that point of timber
there below the camp, and take care of the horses
that we bring to you," I told him.

"You know that I was but making nothing-
talk," he answered.

Sun was not far above the mountains when
the Crow hunters came riding back up the valley,
their women trailing after them with their travois
horses and packhorses drawing and carrying big
loads of meat and hides. Again the men were
singing happily; their women, too. I watched my
spotted horse and its rider. The man was short [825]
and slender. The horse seemed not to be tired, for
now and then he pranced, trotted sideways.

I said to my companions: "See my beautiful
spotted horse. See him prance. He is not tired, he,
my spotted horse."

"But after being used all day, and tied again
for the night, he will have little strength to make
the long, fast run we will have to make," said one.

"Ah! But the rider is going to let him graze [789]
until night," I answered.

is a place known as the Snake Pit, which few people have gone into to investigate. Even today, early on a cool morning, one can see the steam rising from the entrance to a large den. It was in that area that Calf Shirt once went to seek a vision, through which he was given the Power of Rattlesnakes. I have never heard the exact story of his vision but the following story is an indication of the Powers it gave to him.

Calf Shirt's sister was married to a Blood named Cree Man, who did not treat her properly. According to custom, a girl's brother could go and take back his mistreated sister, which Calf Shirt did. When Cree Man came to see about his wife, Calf Shirt told him, "If you want your wife back you will have to prove to me that you will devote yourself to her better. To do this you must obtain for me one of my Medicine animals." He then told Cree Man how to get to a particular snake den and how to identify a certain large rattlesnake there. He told Cree Man that the large snake would be curled up outside the entrance to the den. He told him to look for a certain plant in the vicinity. He said, "Put some of this plant in your mouth and chew it. When you see the snake, rub some of it on your hands and pick the snake up by the neck, not too tight, and hold it next to your bare skin until it gets to know you."

Cree Man went to the other side of a place called Turnip Hill, near Lethbridge. When he got there the snakes were just coming out for the morning. He watched until a very large snake emerged and curled up by the doorway. Cree Man spit some of the chewed-up plant on his hands and some on the snake's head. The snake lay very still. Cree Man prayed fervently as he reached forward to pick up the snake. He told it, "I came to get Calf Shirt's Medicine. I am going to take you home with me." He held the snake up against the bare skin of his stomach and the snake coiled itself around his waist. He got on his horse carefully, so that he would not injure the snake or

aroused it, and rode back home as fast as he could. 586
When Cree Man arrived at the camp, Calf Shirt 593
asked for the snake. Cree Man began to shake 825
and cry. He was afraid to touch the snake again 789
lest it bite his stomach. Calf Shirt told him to spit
some more of the plant on his hands and on the
snake's head, after which Cree Man was able to
pick up the snake. Calf Shirt put it into a white
sugar bag.

Cree Man returned to his home with his
wife, but he was unable to sleep for several nights.
He continued to have nightmares about rattle-
snakes. Calf Shirt sent some sacred paint to him
and told him to keep using rattlesnakes for his
Power, now that he knew how to handle them.
Cree Man just wanted to forget the whole ex-
perience.

Calf Shirt used his Rattlesnake Power to 756
doctor various ailments. One of his specialties was 842
sterilizing women. Among his doctoring articles [237]
was a buckskin snake that was painted black and [531]
had a green glass bead attached to the head and a
small bell to the tail. He would lay this snake next
to a woman's body, sing his song and give her
some kind of Medicine, and the woman would
never have children again.

Oddly enough, however, he did not have the 756
Power to doctor rattlesnake bites. One time he 752
was careless with the one that he carried with him [759]
and it bit him. His relative, old Weasel Head,
paid a good horse to a deaf old woman who was
able to doctor Calf Shirt until he was well.

The Old Man said that Calf Shirt was 756
famous everywhere, but that few people came 231
very near him, because they feared his snakes. He [559]
always kept one in a cloth or buckskin bag inside
his shirt, by his stomach. The Old Man said, "If
he came and sat down at a dance or gathering,
everyone around him would get up in a hurry and
sit somewhere else. We always wondered what he
fed his snakes."

Calf Shirt's Powers taught him to design a 756
sacred tipi. It was painted blue and had rattle- 778
532

slipped on the way and I had fallen off and cut my knee on sharp rocks. We didn't stay in this camp long before we went on again, with me in great agony. We went as far as Big Rocky Coulee, where we camped again. I kept watch, since my leg would not let me have any rest, while the others slept. 727 [164]

After a while I spotted a lone antelope heading our way. I sat still and just moved my head slightly, now and then. Antelope are pretty curious animals. This one kept coming closer to see who I was. When he got close enough I slowly raised my rifle and knocked him over with one shot. The rest of the party jumped up from their sleep, thinking the battle was on again. They were quite angry with me for scaring them that way, but we all felt much better after roasting a bunch of fresh meat and having our first real meal in many days. We ate some raw liver first, then made some blood soup to get our stomachs ready for the meat we were roasting. [224] [825] [262] [252] [264]

To make the soup we used the paunch of the antelope for a kettle. We tied it at both ends. Then we dug a pit and lined it with the antelope's skin, so that it would hold water. Into the pit full of water we dropped hot stones from the 252 [237] [415]

[p.298-B]

22: Wissler & Duvall E,I-5 (1902-1907) 1908
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there was in the world and the shell contained all the water there was in the ocean (?).

After a time, Moon said to her daughter-in-law, "Now I shall give you a root-digger, and you may go out to dig roots; but you are not to dig that big turnip there, because it is medicine [nätŏji'wā]." So the young woman went about the sky country digging roots for their food. She often looked at that fine large turnip growing there, and was curious to know why she was forbidden to dig it up. In course of time she gave birth to a child. One day, when it was old enough to sit alone, she said to herself as she went out to dig roots, "Now no one will know about it if I do dig it up." So she stuck her digging-stick into the ground under the turnip; but, when she tried to raise it, the stick would not move. When she found that she could not get the stick out, she began to cry. Then two large white cranes flew down; one was a male and the other a female. The young woman prayed to them for help to get her root-digger out of the ground. Then the Crane-Woman[1] said, "When I married I was true to my vow. I never had anything to do with any other man than my husband. It is because of this that I have power to help you. Your mother[2] gave you this digging-stick. Now I shall teach you the songs that go with it." Then Crane-Woman made a smudge, took the hands of the woman into her own, and, while she sang the songs, placed them upon the digging-stick. Then Crane-Woman pulled out the stick, and, marching around in the direction of the sun, made three movements toward the turnip, and with the fourth dug it out. Now the young woman took the digging-stick and the turnip home with her. When they saw what she had, they reprimanded her. Morning Star said to her, "What did you see when you dug out this turnip?" The woman replied, "I looked down through the hole and saw the earth, the trees, the rivers, and the lodges of my people."

"Now," said Morning Star, "I cannot keep you any longer. You must take the boy with you and go back to your people; but when you get there you must not let him touch the ground for two-seven [fourteen] days. If he should touch the ground before that time, he will become a puff-ball [a fungus], go up as a star, and fit into the hole from which you dug the turnip. He will never move from that place, like the other stars, but will always be still."

Sun said to her, "I shall call in a man to help you down to the earth." After a while a man came with a strong spider-web, to one end of which he

[1] In all Blackfoot narratives where animals take important parts in medicine procedure, it is assumed that they are persons in disguise, and "become as people."

[2] In all ceremonial gifts or transfers, the giver is spoken of as a father or mother, according to the sex; hence the thought is, that this digging-stick was not an ordinary gift, but carried with it ceremonial obligations.

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825
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Some Adventures at Old Fort Conrad (1878–79)

We all moved down to the edge of the pines to sit until it would be dark enough for us to resume our way. As the sun was setting, suddenly a raven, hoarsely croaking, came flying toward us from the east, circled over us several times, and still croaking, flew back eastward. Then came back, again circled over us, and flew eastward and disappeared. Silently, breathlessly, we watched it and now we knew that it, wisest of birds, true friend of the warriors, had come to urge us to keep on. Many-Tail-Feathers was the leader of the Raven Carrier band of the All Friends Society, the warrior's society of the Blackfoot tribes, so we knew the raven had come especially to give him its message.

Said he: "Now I know that we are to kill that worst of all Cutthroats, White Dog."

"But how are you going to find White Dog in the big camp of his people," I asked. "How know him?"

"Know him," almost shouted Many-Tail-Feathers. "Three of us here, Little Otter, White Antelope, and I, have twice fought the man and his companions, and twice he got away from us. So, well we know him, his appearance, his shouting to us in our own language, 'Me, I am White Dog.' So, when we find the Cutthroats' camp, we will, in the early night, while the fires are burning, look into lodge after lodge until we find him, kill him, and run for the horses that we have already taken."

"And what will we others be doing while you three seek him?"

"That you should ask a so nothing question. Of course we first go into the camp and take some of the fast buffalo horses there tied before the lodges of their owners every night. Then you others will hold them in readiness for our getaway while we seek out and kill our enemy."

So there we had it, our leader's plan for the raid. It didn't look good to us. To prowl about in the camp and lead out the horses that we needed would be dangerous enough. But for our leader, Little Otter, and White Antelope to go from lodge to lodge drawing aside, however slightly, the door curtains and peeking in looking for White Dog, well, that, we thought, was craziness. They would surely be

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the belongings of our poor, dead friends. Oh, too bad, too bad that we can't bury them." 721

My wound was bleeding, painful. Before we were halfway back to the grove I was feeling faint. Many-Tail-Feathers called a halt, relieved me of my rifle and pouch, and was binding my wound with a piece of my shirt when, down on the rim of the plain, guns boomed, and we saw Heavy Runner fall, then jump up and start shooting.

"Not killed," said Many-Tail-Feathers. "Not far enough on his way to get the scalps, either. Now he may join us again."

The Cutthroats did not come on after us, well knowing what we could do to them with our repeating rifles and not knowing that we did not have others close by. They went back up on the plain, doubtless to send one of their number down to their camp for help, and to keep watch on us.

The sun had set when we got back to the grove and sat down to talk over our situation, the while we watched for our enemies along the rim of the plain. Heavy Runner joined us, sullen at his foolish act, not wounded severely. We would have to leave the grove before the whole force of the Cutthroats could come up and surround it, Many-Tail-Feathers said. They would expect us to try to escape them by going up the valley, keeping well within the timber. But we would not do that. We would, instead, cross the river and travel northward on the plain until break of day, then lie hidden until night when we could safely strike out for our camp.

"But, Chief, we are not to try to raid the Cutthroats' camp, take some of their fast horses?" Weasel Tail asked.

"No. Failing to find us here, they will keep close watch upon their horses for many nights to come. So is it that we are going home on foot."

"Going home," I growled. "Our two good friends killed, two of us wounded, we here in a most dangerous situation. Many-Tail-Feathers, what now of your good-luck vision, the good-luck coming and calling of the raven?" 787 825 721

"True they proved to be. I killed White Dog, worst one of all our enemies, did I not? That our friends were killed was by no fault of mine. Somehow they failed to get the protection of the Above Ones."

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others were busy with that, I, with willow pole and line, hook 136
baited with grasshoppers, hurried to the river and was soon yanking
from a deep pool my first Montana trout, a beauty of a pound or
more; these were trout so different from those trout of the Adiron-
dacks of New York, in which I had spent many a vacation. I deeply
regretted that I had not brought west my light fly rod, reel, and book
of flies, for bait fishing was not sport to me. I caught, cleaned, and 262
fried crisply brown two panfuls of trout, and then, to my surprise, 776
Kipp alone joined me in eating of them. It was, I learned, that the [825]
Blackfoot tribes believed fish to be the property of the dread *Suyi*
Tupi (Water People), monsters of human form who inhabit the
rivers and lakes and at every opportunity seize unwary swimmers
and draw them down to their underwater homes, there to kill them.

Early on the following morning, we began cutting and hauling 443
logs for our post, building it in the large cottonwood grove in the
forks of the river and the creek. We completed the work early in
October. One cabin, sixteen by forty feet, was our trade room and
storehouse; the other cabin of three rooms was our kitchen, occupied
by Crow Woman and daughter, and by Pearson and wife; Kipp and
I had the third room. Our teamsters, when present, slept in the ware-
house. Rude our post but sufficient for our needs.

The Pikunis and a few lodges of the Bloods arrived soon after we 114
completed the post, and came, too, one who was to become and
always remain a close friend of mine, Eli Guardipee, named by the
Pikunis *Isinamakan*, "Takes Gun Ahead." He was of that family
for which so many places in the north are named, as, for instance,
the Guardipee Crossing of Bow River. His keen-witted, handsome
mother was a Shoshoni woman. He was but a year older than I;
tall, slender, very intelligent, kind of heart, brave to a fault; and
the most successful hunter, the surest shot that I have ever known.

The fur of the buffalo did not become prime until November 439
so we would not be getting any tanned robes over our counter until
December. But with the arrival of the Pikunis we began buying from
them daily a hundred and more hides of deer, elk, and antelope, so
plentiful were they upon the near plains and mountains. We gave [435]
one dollar's worth of merchandise for a hide. We had no scales, no

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276 or burning stick to the mixture, blew a whiff of smoke to the sky,
793 exclaiming: "Oh, Sun! Oh, Above People! Pity us; help us." Then
574 another whiff to the ground with: "Oh, Earth Mother! Pity us; help
[576] us." With that, he leisurely drew a few whiffs of smoke from the pipe, inhaling deeply, and from him the pipe went from hand to hand straight to the end man of the row, then from him to be smoked by the others in turn until it returned to the host. So was it smoked from east to west, thus imitating the daily courses of the sun. Sun
● [825] priests in the row of guests grasped the stem of the pipe with both hands when taking, smoking, and passing it on, imitating the actions of the bear, sacred animal, when seizing anything. No others were privileged to do that. (Then, too, the Sun priests' special name for the bear was *páksi kwoyi*, "sticky mouth." The common people called the animal *kaiyo*, "lost.")

276 The pipe smoked out, the host cleaned the bowl, allowed it to cool,
574 then refilled it, and it went again the length of the row of guests. Generally, it was filled and smoked three times in the course of an hour or so of pleasant talk. Then at last, ostentatiously knocking the pipe bowl upon his tobacco cutting board, the host loudly exclaimed, "*Kyi! Itsimitsi!*" ("There! It is burned out!"). Whereat the guests arose, filed out of the lodge, and went their several ways. What a boon that would be to civilized hosts so at will to dismiss their guests!

281 Persistent hunting and killing of cow buffalo began in Novem-
[221] ber, and the women were soon busily converting the heavily furred
[462] hides into well-tanned robes. It was arduous work. The hides were fleshed; that is, cleaned of all adhering scraps of meat and fat, then
[412] laced into lodgepole frames, where they dried as stiff and firm as
[237] thin boards. Then, standing upon the hide, smooth side up, the tanner, with an elkhorn-handled, steel-bladed instrument the shape of a hoe, chipped it to about one-half its original thickness and rubbed it with grease. When that was thoroughly soaked in, the hide was then well smeared with a mixture of boiled liver and brains, folded and rolled, and laid away for several days in order for the mixture to neutralize its glue. Then came the hardest of the work: the tanner for an hour or so at a time rubbed and seesawed the hide against upright, stretched thongs of rawhide, until, at last, it became almost as

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000 So, for all his education, Riel was a visionary, a dreamer. He was sure that he could accomplish whatever he set out to do. He once said to me that he was a second Moses, that, like the Moses of the Bible, the Lord was with him; he would surely lead his people out of bondage.

And so came Riel's Rebellion of 1884, with the result that he was hanged and Big Bear imprisoned for the rest of his life.

There where we were, and afterward in Canada, Riel often importuned Crow Big Feet (Crow Foot) to join him with his warriors in fighting the Red Coats. He steadily refused. For that, and for his constant friendliness to them, the Canadians erected a handsome monument in memory of him. Today a circle of cemented stones and a bronze tablet, on a bluff overlooking Bow River, mark where stood the lodge in which Crow Big Feet died.

439 All through the winter some of the Indians of the three tribes were camped close to our post, and at times they were all there, trading in [435] their buffalo robes, resting from their strenuous hunting. We paid, in trade, five dollars for a well-tanned, head-and-tail cow buffalo [436] robe. A family would often bring in five to ten robes at a time. The man would count the one-dollar brass checks that we gave for them and, reserving a few of them for his own use, give the rest to his women. Their purchases would be mainly sugar, tea, flour, baking powder, cloth for gowns, beads, thread, and needles. With his 273 checks, the man would buy tobacco, cartridges, and an order of whisky. But not always whisky. Many of the men of each tribe did not drink at all. Crow Big Feet was one of them. But enough of them did imbibe to make the camps very lively of nights. In dozens of lodges there would be large gatherings of men and women, drumming, singing, dancing, telling stories.

• 825 By turns during the winter Kipp, Eli Guardipee, and I took a few days off to visit in the Blackfoot or the Blood camp, out on the plain, and to hunt. On a day in March when Kipp was visiting in the Blackfoot camp, he took part in the run of a big herd of buffalo in which a young hunter killed a big, spotted cow. Its head and its tail were pure white; there was a white strip running from its

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neck back along the length of its belly; and there was a large round white spot on its flanks. The young man carefully removed its hide, gave it to his father, old Spotted Eagle, and he told Kipp that, when it was tanned, he should have it. At once one of the Sun priests (medicine men, sacred pipe men) made objection. White buffalo belonged to Sun. Accordingly, when, in the summer, the Sun's lodge would be built by the sacred-vow woman, the tanned robe would have to be tied to its center post, presented to Him Above. To which Spotted Eagle replied that this was not a white buffalo; it was only white spotted, therefore not Sun's own. Sun would not want it. Therefore Raven Quiver (Kipp) should have it.

So, on a day in April, when we were apprised that old Spotted Eagle and his family were coming in with the spotted robe, as Kipp directed, we hurried to pile on the floor of the trade room some presents for him: a sack of sugar, five hundred cartridges, fifty pounds of flour, two blankets, one Winchester carbine, five pounds of tobacco, a gallon keg of whisky, little things for women.

Came in the old man, his son, his two wives—the old man with his robe on his arm. "As I promised you, Raven Quiver, here it is," he said, handing it to Kipp.

"Good. And there are a few presents for you all," Kipp replied, pointing to the pile of things on the floor. The old man stared at them, clapped hand to mouth in pleased surprise, exclaimed: "*Pubts ikahksaps nituka, Mastúnopechis!*" ("How generous is my friend, Raven Quiver!"). The son and the wives were equally happily surprised; they all but ran to the pile—the son to take up the carbine, the women to kneel and fondle their knicknacks. Said the old man to them: "At once wrap that keg in a blanket."

The robe was perfectly tanned, as soft as velvet; and on its flesh side the old man had painted some pictographs of enemies he had killed, enemy horses he had stolen, and encounters with grizzly bears. Said Kipp when we had extended and pinned it to a wall of the trade room: "It is the only pure-white-spotted robe that I have ever seen. And it is worth something. Anyhow a hundred dollars."

Word that we had a white-spotted buffalo robe spread all up and

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way to help their own hungry ones. I answered that I would do all that I possibly could for them.

I had long been a contributor to *Forest and Stream,* best of all outdoor magazines, published in New York, and so had had much correspondence with its owner and editor, George Bird Grinnell. So now, upon arriving home at Fort Conrad, I wrote him about the destitution of the Pikunis and asked what could be done to help them. In due time I received a wire from him, forwarded by mail from Fort Benton, advising that I go up to the reservation at once, make a thorough investigation of the conditions, and send him a full report on it. Twenty-four hours after getting the message, I rode into a camp of the Pikunis a couple of miles above the agency, on Badger Creek, and was welcomed in the lodge of my brother-in-law Boy Chief. In a lodge near it women were wailing for the dead; in answer to my query, Boy Chief said: "They mourn for old Black Antelope. Dead because of his defiance of the gods. Hunger gnawing him, he caught some spotted fish (trout), they, as you know, the property, the food of the terrible Underwater People—food forbidden to our kind. We all begged him not to do it. He would not heed our warnings. Ordered his women to cook them for him. They would not even touch the spotted ones. He cooked them himself, ate them all, four big spotted fish. That was last night. Just before you arrived, he died."

"Too bad. Poor old man. Forever gone from us," I said. Useless for me to say that trout were healthful, nourishing and that in the many streams of the reservation there were enough of them to keep all the tribe from starving. Nor could I advise them to kill and eat their horses, which to them were sacred animals of almost human attributes—animals that they loved almost as much as they did their children. And, different from other tribes, they believed that dogs were sacred animals and therefore forbidden food.

In turn I visited White Calf's and Three Sun's large camps on Two Medicine Lodges River, then Red Paint's camp of about one hundred lodges on Birch Creek. All alike, they were increasingly suffering from want of food—the weaker, tubercular ones already dying. Of big game none remained, either on the plain or in the

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tribe. We were a crowd of men and women sitting close around the little sweat lodge, listening to it all; the prayers and songs, solemn, fervently impressive, heart stirring, they brought tears to all eyes. Finally the old man and Fox Eyes reached out for their blankets, and, wrapped in them, came out and with heads bowed walked slowly to the river to bathe and dress.

On the following morning, accompanied by his mother, sister, and a half-dozen men relatives for protection, Fox Eyes rode off for his fasting place, and I joined a party of hunters. We were back long before sundown with the choice parts of some buffalo cows we had killed, just in time to see old Black Otter riding the round of the camp, stopping occasionally to sing a sacred song, pray, and call upon the people to pray for the safety and success of Fox Eyes in his lone and strenuous fast.

Three mornings later Badger Woman, Little Bird Woman, and I rode out to visit the faster. At the mouth of Crooked Creek we turned up the valley of the Missouri and then up to the foot of a cliff, where we left our horses, climbed for a time, and turned off upon a narrow shelf of the cliff; presently we came to Fox Eyes in a cavelike depression formed by the overhanging rock. Wrapped in his blanket, he was lying upon a buffalo robe, and at his side were his gun and a red-painted, empty, water bowl. "*Ha!* Here you are: mother, sister, and my good friend *Apikuni*, too," he said.

"Of course," I answered. "I shall come often to see you if I may." We sat down beside him, and his mother emptied a bladder skin of water that she had brought into the wooden bowl; carefully he raised it, took a few slight sips of the water, said that he would like to drink it all.

"You haven't yet had a vision?" his mother asked.

"Last night, the beginning of one," he answered. "I was walking in a valley, in a grassy length of it. A big longtail (cougar) came out from the timber, and I said to it: 'Oh, you powerful, always-successful killer of your food. I am poor. Pity me. Help me; give me of your power; help me to live a long and successful life.' He looked at me, turning his head this way and that way. At last he answered: 'You

want me to be your sacred helper. Well, I think that I can . . . .' And then, seeming to see or hear something that frightened him, he went leaping back into the timber, and I awoke and could not sleep again."

"Oh, too bad. Too bad," his mother wailed. "And you so desirous to obtain a helpful vision. And so hungry, thirsty. Oh, I worry about you, here likely to be discovered by some enemy war party that may come along. Well, this day I shall sacrifice to Sun for you. Yes, I shall give him my best, elk-teeth-trimmed gown, pray him to give you quickly a helpful vision and let you safely return to us."

"Yes. Do that. And this I say to you: Do not return here until five nights have passed. Your coming disturbs me. I must be alone, have constant quiet in order to obtain a helpful vision. So now go, and I pray Sun to keep you safe, you three."

"Oh, my son, my son," his mother wailed. "You to lie here five nights without our help? Why, you would die from want of water."

"No. One can live longer than that without food or water. And it may be that I shall obtain my vision this coming night, or tomorrow night. And now go. It is that I must be alone and pray."

Soon after we returned to camp, Badger Woman made a tight roll of her beautiful, valuable, elk-trimmed ceremonial gown, went out and tied it to a limb of a tree. With fervent prayer she gave it to Sun; she sought the great sky god to protect Fox Eyes in his lone fast and to give him a powerful vision. And there the gown would remain, gradually disintegrated by wind and weather. None, not even an enemy war party, would dare to steal a gift to Sun.

Five mornings later I went again with the women to the faster in the niche in the cliff, and was surprised at the change in his appearance in that short time. Emaciated and pale, he lay upon his robe, and feebly he raised a hand to greet us. But he happily smiled and said, almost whispered: "I have been given that which I sought. Take me home.

"Last night, as I slept after long and earnestly praying," he began, "I, my shadow (soul, spirit), left my body and traveled far, crossing a great plain. After a long time I came to the edge of a valley and saw a river in it, and I was glad, for I was very thirsty. Down I ran to it, and to the murmuring of the swift stream. Never had I heard so pleas-

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ant a sound; it cheered me, and again I cried out, as I had all the long way across the plain: 'Oh, pity me, Sun, and all you various ones of the shadow world. Be some one of you my sacred helper, that I may survive all dangers and attain old age.'

"I was looking down the river as I prayed. I heard a splash the other way and turning, there, almost beside me, was a certain water animal, sitting at the edge of the water and looking at me. He was so old that his fur was mostly white. 'Oh, young man,' he said to me, 'from afar I heard your cry for help, and so have come to you to be your sacred helper.'

"And then, mother, sister, *Apikuni,* that water animal, he talked with me a long time, telling me what I should do, how sacrifice to him, how call him to my aid when in need. But just what he said, just who he was, that I may not tell you. I wish I could, but you know that no one may reveal what is between him and his sacred helper, lest bad luck come to him."

"Yes, we know that; we will never question you about it, and oh, how glad I am for you. Well we know that all the water animals, even the smallest kinds of them, are Sun favored, and so very powerful. So come, my son, homeward we go," his mother said. His sister gave him her horse and rode double with her mother, and in the late afternoon we were back in camp.

The next evening, well recovered from his fast, for the first time in his life, Fox Eyes gave a feast-and-smoke, and all who were invited came—staid warriors and several sacred-pipe men, believed to be particularly favored by Sun. They drank the soup, ate the rich, broiled buffalo tongues set before them, and during the smoking of the four pipes afterward congratulated Fox Eyes on his endurance and the success of the fast. I was there with them, although I had no right to sit with such dignitaries. But many privileges were accorded the white brother of Fox Eyes.

As my almost-brother filled the pipe for the fourth time, and passed it to the man next on his left to light, he said: "My friends, I now have my sacred helper, but without a shield I cannot go to war. Who will make one for me if I provide the material for it?"

"I will," said Black Otter, oldest of the sacred-pipe men. "And I!

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714 And I!" cried the others, but Black Otter had been first to answer, and it was agreed that he should do it, Fox Eyes saying to him: "I am pleased. I know that you will make me a shield of powerful protection. I give you two of my horses."

[793] To ask that some renowned medicine man (Sun priest) make the shield had been the object of the feast, and all who came knew it. [237] After they had gone Fox Eyes asked me if I would assist him in get- [123] ting the necessary bull's hide for the shield and the eagle tail feathers for its fringe, and I was all for it. Since a buffalo bull could be killed at any time, we decided to secure the tail feathers first. Now, while it was allowable to kill eagles in any possible way for ordinary purposes, there was but one way to get them for decorating shields, which, to the Blackfeet, were their most cherished, believed-to-be-protective possessions, and that way was, of course, difficult and dangerous.

223 So was it that, on the following morning, with a couple of buffalo [412] shoulder blades for shovels, and a stout, sharp-pointed length of [237] birch sapling for gouging the earth, Fox Eyes rode to the top of a butte a couple of miles above camp and began to dig a pit in it. It was hard work; we were three mornings in completing it, a pit about five feet long, three feet wide, and four feet deep. We then packed up a lot of willow sticks, laid them crisscross over the pit, and covered them with grass in so natural a manner that the covering had all the appearance of solid ground.

● [825] Better than anything else, not excepting even the young of deer [237] or antelope, eagles like the livers of wolves and coyotes. Since it might require several days to kill one of them, we sewed up a wolf-skin, stuffed it with grass in as lifelike a manner as possible, and laid it upon the covering of the pit; last we cut a gash in its side and inserted a large piece of buffalo liver, leaving a part of it protruding. All was in readiness now for catching an eagle when it should come to the bait. Fox Eyes was to sit in the pit waiting and when one came and began eating the liver, he was to reach up, grasp it by its legs, and, drawing it down into the pit, kneel upon it until the life was extinct. This was a hazardous undertaking; there was great risk that

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223 a hawk. The day was hot. With my back against the tree, I frequently dozed, awoke with a start, and, snatching up my telescope, eagerly leveled it at the covering of the pit. Always I could see the dark blotch of the liver in the stuffed wolf-hide. No eagle had been there. None came that day. Fox Eyes' heart was low when, as sun was setting, we headed back to camp. But there Black Otter restored his courage by saying: "You could not expect to seize an eagle on the first day in your pit, but sooner or later you will get one, for my prayers for your success are powerful."

On the following morning Fox Eyes was again in his pit, and I on watch upon the lone pine butte. Very soon I saw an eagle circling round and round, high above the pit. Suddenly he dived straight down and alighted on the ground fifteen or twenty yards to the east of it. I kept my telescope leveled at him. How big and proud he looked as he stood there plucking at and smoothing his feathers, occasionally cocking his head sideways and looking at the stuffed wolfskin. He seemed to be suspicious of it for he stood there a long time, anxiously watching it. But at last he moved, stalking slowly around the pit. Before he had half circled it, came a raven from I knew not where, at once lit upon the stuffed wolfskin, and began eating the liver. That allayed the eagle's suspicion of it and angered him. With wings half-spread, he swiftly ran to the bait, driving away the raven, and himself began to feast.

"Oh, Fox Eyes," I cried aloud in my excitement, "Seize him! Seize him!"

As if in answer to my entreaty, he did just that. All at once the eagle began to flap its wings and struggle; willow sticks and grass flew in all directions, and then the big bird disappeared. Casing my telescope, I ran to the horses and, after unfastening their picket ropes, was soon riding down my butte and up the other one. As I neared the pit, Fox Eyes climbed out of it and held the eagle up before him for me to see. It was so large that his body was almost hidden by it.

"Oh, *Apikuni!* Isn't it a big one; and how perfect its tail feathers," [176] he cried as I rode up and dismounted beside him. "Oh, Sun! Oh, my [825] powerful water-animal helper," he continued. "You have been good to me; you have powerfully helped me this day."

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It was indeed a magnificent bird, a male war eagle,[2] its tail feathers long, smooth, glossy, white with black tips. As we rode homeward with the bird, I was as pleased with the success of the day as he.

"A good beginning," Black Otter said to him. "Catch three more of them, and then I will prepare you for the war trail."

Within ten days' time Fox Eyes had the tail feathers of four eagles, all of them caught at the pit. Wonderfully good luck, all said, for he now had enough of the tail feathers for the fringe of the shield and for a war bonnet, too. We then went out hunting, and with my rifle he killed a buffalo bull, an old, old one, whose once crescent-shaped, smooth, black, sharp horns were now mere rough, pale stubs.

"He has been brave; he has fought many battles and survived them," said my friend, as we were removing the hide from its neck and shoulders. "It is a sign that a shield made of his hide will be my powerful protector, keep me safe in fights with our enemies."

There was evidenced his real faith. To the Blackfeet there was a sign, an omen, for good or for bad in everything, no matter how trivial. We took the piece of thick hide to Badger Woman, and she carefully removed its fur, leaving the glossy, brownish-black surface intact. Then one afternoon it was handed to old Black Otter, and the interesting ceremony of transforming it into a shield took place.

Black Otter was dressed in his war clothes, soft buckskin shirt, leggings, and moccasins, beautifully embroidered with varicolored porcupine-quill designs, and on his head was a horns-and-ermine-skins war bonnet. His hands and face were painted a dull red, the sacred color. By the side of his lodge the piece of bull hide was stretched and pegged to the ground, and, kneeling on it, he began to pray, at the same time starting to cut from the hide a circular piece about four feet in diameter.

"Oh, Sun! Oh, Night Light! Morning Star! Oh, all you Above Ones," he chanted, "Listen and pity us this day. This shield that I am making, give it of your sacred power so that it will keep its owner safe in his encounters with the enemy. Oh, Above Ones! To all of

[2] It was the golden eagle, *aquila chrysaëtos canadensis.*

24: Schultz F-3 (1877-1947) 1980 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

796 782 714 us, men, women, children, give long good life, good health; help us to overcome our enemies who are ever seeking to destroy us."

714 281 [793] Some women were heating a number of stones in a little fire, and near it a small pit had been dug in the ground. The women rolled part of the stones into it, covered them with a thin layer of loose earth. Then Black Otter, with the help of three war-clothed friends, laid the circular piece of hide over the pit and, inserting pegs into slits that had been cut at regular intervals along its edge, fastened it to the ground.

[555] As each man drove in a peg, he counted coup, told of some fight with the enemy in which he had been the victor. Tightly the hide had been fastened down; it began to shrink from the heat under it until it pulled the pegs over. As fast as they loosened, the three men helpers [793] drove them in again; Black Otter carefully supervised the work, often feeling of the hide to make sure that it did not get hot enough to burn, and calling for more hot rocks as they were needed.

In about an hour the hide had shrunk to about half its original [793] diameter, and was at least an inch thick. During that time Black [782] Otter had frequently prayed, and with his helpers had sung a num- [533] ber of sacred songs. Finally Fox Eyes took the hide home and in due 714 time made a beautiful, tail-feathers-trimmed shield of it. Lastly he made a war bonnet of the remaining tail feathers, and was then ready [721] for war. A few days later he did set out with a small party to raid the horse herds of the Assiniboines, and I returned to the trading 727 post. A month or more later Fox Eyes came to visit me, came sing- 554 ing a war song, riding a fine horse and leading another. Tossing its [533] rope to me, he said: "*Apikuni*, I give to you this Cutthroat (Assini- boine) horse. Three of them I took. One Cutthroat I killed and this —see it—many-shots gun I took from him. *Apikuni*, Sun is good to [787] me. My sacred helper, that water animal of my vision, is powerful. [825] *Apikuni*, I am a happy man. I am soon to have a lodge of my own."

"Good! Have three wives, four wives. While you are about it, be a real chief," I said.

24: Schultz F-3 (1877-1947) 1980 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

on down it at great speed. A big, proud bay stallion led them, and he was a beast to stir one's heart as he passed, his heavy, long mane and tail streaming straight back, his shapely feet hitting the turf with a springy lightness that a fox might have envied. 136

Occasionally he turned his head to look back; it was plain that he was holding himself in to suit the pace of his following, mares, colts, yearlings, and two-year-olds. Soon they passed down around a bend of the valley. They had not been an unusual sight—wild horses were then fairly plentiful on the plain between the Missouri and the Yellowstone—but the beauty and grace and strength of the leader of this band was something not to be forgotten. "Oh, oh! If he were only mine!" Eagle Head fairly groaned.

But that was out of the question. Our horses had not sufficient wind and speed to overtake him, and if they had, and we succeeded in roping him, he would undoubtedly put up such a fight that we would be glad to let him go.

We remained seated in the pines, hoping to discover what had frightened the horses. The lone old bull had paid little heed to them; he had only raised his head for a moment and looked at them. Then he lowered it again and stood motionless and humped up, a most melancholy object.

The horses had barely disappeared around the bend when a big gray wolf—attracted no doubt by the sound of their passing—came to the rim of the valley straight across from us and looked all up and down it. Eagle Head said that he had recognized the thudding of the horses' hoofs on the hard ground—so different from the rattling of buffalo hoofs—and his mouth was watering; better than a buffalo calf, better than elk or deer or antelope was the meat of a colt to him, and he wanted some. [825]

But the herd had passed and he was disappointed. He stared down at the old bull, turned and walked away from the valley rim, turned again and came back to it, squatted upon his haunches, pointing his nose to the sky, and gave four long, loud, and melancholy howls. From the southwest came the answer of one of his kind. He howled again, and from the south and the west came other long, loud, answering howls. I know of nothing so sad as the howling of wolves; they chillingly voice deep, hopeless despair. 000

24: Schultz F-3 (1877-1947) 1980 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

000 "He is calling his relatives. I think he intends to feast upon the old bull," Eagle Head said.

The wolf looked this way, that way, whence the answering howls had come, at intervals howling again and again, but without replies. Presently, however, a wolf appeared, coming from the south. The two met, sniffed at one another, wagging their tails; then side by side stood looking down at the bull, the caller-wolf howling again. The bull paid no attention to it, did not even look up at the howler. Slowly, stiffly he lowered himself to the ground and began chewing his cud.

There was more wagging of tails, more questioning sniffing of one another, as, one by one, five more wolves came in answer to the calls; once two of them playfully put on a sham fight, standing upon their hind legs and, breast to breast, snapping each at the other's neck. "*Ha!* Although the moon is still far off for wolves to mate, they are fighting!" Eagle Head exclaimed.

"Fighting wolves hold their tails stiffly up. These two are wagging their tails; they are playing," I said.

"*Ha!* True. True. So they are," he agreed.

By this time they had milled around so much that we could no longer distinguish the one who had called them together, but it was probably he who now led off over the rim of the plain and down the slope of the valley, the others closely following. The old bull got wind of them when they struck the floor of the valley, and with surprising agility he got up onto his feet and faced them. Trotting, they completely circled him, at a distance of about fifty yards, then stopped, facing him, looking this way, that way, and sniffing the air for scent of anything inimical to their plan. But they did not suspicion our presence; the wind was in our favor.

● 825 Eagle Head always maintained that it was the caller, the leader of the wolf band, that planned and ordered the attack upon the bull. Certain it was that together, suddenly, they leaped forward, two to feint attack upon his head, the others to run swiftly to and fro behind him, getting ever closer to his heels, their purpose to hamstring him. He seemed to know their plan—perhaps he had been attacked by wolves before—he sought to protect his rear, and to do

24: Schultz F-3 (1877-1947) 1980 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

that tried to face all ways at once. Old though he was and huge, between anger and fear he developed a surprising agility. To run from them was impossible; the battle had to be fought there on the spot. He lunged now at this wolf, again at that one, wheeling all the time; in fact, he spun round and round like a huge, erratic top. We could hear his snorts of rage. "It is not fair. I am going to save him!" I exclaimed, raising my rifle; but Eagle Head stayed my aim.

"It is his time to die," said he.

"But he wants to live as much as we do."

"Yes, he does, but it is not for us to interfere. Old Man—World Maker—created buffalo for food for men and wolves. Should you save this old and worn-out bull from them, they would only travel on and pull down the next one—and it, perhaps, a young cow that we may need some day."

There was good sound sense in that argument, and I lowered my rifle. The bull was whirling around swiftly, kicking vigorously and deftly, once planting a hoof in the side of a wolf with such force as to send it high in the air.

But in a few minutes the bull showed signs of weakening, and no wonder; the tremendous strain of his defense was too severe for his old and stiffened joints. He kicked less frequently; the wolves dashed in closer and closer. In passing, one of them snapped its jaws on a hind leg, just above the gambrel joint, where the great tendon—the hamstring—is most exposed. Lightninglike it was, but that one snap severed the cord and the bull lurched backward and sideways, and nearly fell. As he struggled to right himself, all of the wolves vied with one another to get at the tendon of the other hind leg, tore it in two, and the rear part of the big body sagged to the ground. Then for a moment the bull held his foreparts erect, his great shaggy head elevated at a most unwonted angle, and what a pitiable sight he was! But the strain was too great; little by little his forelegs gave way altogether, and suddenly his whole body was prone on the ground.

The wolves were watching, waiting for this, and made a simultaneous dash for the bull's flank—not for his throat, as it is erroneously said to be their method of finishing a victim. It was their intention to take their meal from the living flesh.

24: Schultz F-3 (1877-1947) 1980 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

CHAPTER TWELVE

The Theft of the Sacred Otter Bow-Case (Told by Bird Chief—James Bird)[1]

THE SUMMER OF 1846 was about gone when our little war party returned from the far south—the Always-Summer-Land—with the big band of horses that we had taken from the Mexicans. My brother-in-law, Mad Wolf, brought the sacred white-otter bow-case of his dead brother, Bear Head. I shall never forget that day of our return, our triumphant entry into the great camp of the Pikunis, for, seeing that Mad Wolf had recovered the sacred bow-case, the people went wild with joy, believing as they did that Sun valued a white otter more than any other sacred animal, even a white buffalo, and would therefore particularly favor the owner of the sacred bow-case and the whole tribe as well.

Briefly, the history of the sacred bow-case was that Bear Head and a Cree medicine man named Skunk Cap had one day discovered a white otter, rarest of all albino animals, and had simultaneously shot at it, Bear Head being the one to kill it. But Skunk Cap had angrily claimed that it was his shot that had killed the animal and in various and mean ways had tried to get possession of it. Bear Head, making of its white-furred, softly tanned pelt a beautiful bow-case, had publicly vowed that he would in due time sacrifice it to Sun, hang it to the center post of a sacred lodge that, in the Berries-Ripe Moon of every summer, the tribe built in honor of the great sky god.

[1] Onetime engagé of the Hudson's Bay Company, died on the Blackfoot Indian Reservation, Montana, in 1902, in his eighty-ninth year.
Condensed from *Boy's Life* (July, August, and September, 1935).

returned his gaze, frankly, unflinchingly, and said, "I don't know why I named the dancer for he is nothing to me, nothing at all; no more than the passing wind."

"What a lie! She loves him so much that she can't think of anything else, even to remember that it was her awl that she wanted."

And Handsome Man and his followers heard; they had heard it all, so close were they to our shelter. The followers were embarrassed; their heads drooped; they looked at the ground, anywhere but toward us. But Handsome Man was pleased; boldly, smilingly, he looked at Otter Woman; glanced at angry Talks-with-the-Buffalo and again at Otter Woman. Happily, smugly, he looked at her, sure that, despite her denial of him, she, the most beautiful woman of the camp, was still another victim of his charms. Warily he glanced again at her grimly scowling man; again he smiled at her, and, signing to his followers to resume their drumming, went singing and dancing from us with renewed vigor and grace. Of us all, *Otahki* alone watched his sprightly going. Otter Woman raised her drooping head, tearfully, pleadingly looked at Talks-with-the-Buffalo, and began: "My man . . . ."

He shrugged his shoulders, looked away from her. As though half-dazed, she fumblingly gathered up her quilling materials and went slowly into their lodge. *Otahki* laughed. Her sister *Paiota* frowned at her and said: "Be still, you!"

Silently I handed the smoked-out pipe to my friend and joined Bear Head and his women, sitting under their sun shelter. They had sensed something unpleasant whence I had come, and I told them what had happened. Poor Otter Woman. Never could she be at peace there in that family, they said, for *Otahki* was of very mean heart, very jealous of her, and would do all that she possibly could to make Talks-with-the-Buffalo cast her off.

I had at that time a fly rod, one that I had brought from the States and dearly cherished, for it was, so far as I knew, the only fly rod in all Montana Territory. At sundown that evening I went fishing, accompanied by Bear Head. Not that he fished, or even ate fish, for they were the food of the dread Underwater People and therefore taboo by all of the Blackfoot tribes. But he keenly enjoyed

with meat,' I answered, and tearfully, with never another word to me, they set about their work.

"I did not ask a sacred-pipe man to give me a going-away sweat-lodge bath. No use of that. Time and time again they had done it for me, and always had Sun and his Above Ones failed to heed their fervent prayers for my success against the enemy.

"Night came. Silently my wives watched me sling on my war sack and my shield, take up my gun, and leave them. We were camped, our whole tribe of Pikuni Blackfeet, where Bear (Marias) River joins Big (Missouri) River. Taking up onto the plain, I traveled on eastward, heading the long, deep, and timbered coulees running down into Big River. Old Woman (Night Red Light) came up big and round. The Seven Persons (constellation Ursa Major) were brightly shining and turning in the northern sky, marking the passing of the night.

"Well, one did not need to pray to them for help, I thought. Different from Sun and the other Above Ones, there they were, always helpful when not cloud hidden, plainly telling how long it was since night had come and how far off was the coming of a new day. I was feeling so sad that I had to force myself to walk. What was the trouble with me, what had I done that the Above Ones had failed to hear my prayers to them for success against the enemy, for success in all my activities? They heeded the prayers and the offerings of other men, helped them to be successful in their raids upon our enemies, to become rich from their takings of enemy horses. In all I had been upon eleven raids against the Crows, Cutthroats, Parted Hairs (Sioux), and other enemies, and never yet had I taken an enemy scalp, or even an enemy horse. No wonder that our warriors and hunters shunned me, that my wives lived with me only because they had to. Well, upon this, my twelfth war trail, I would make a successful raid upon the enemy, or die trying, I said to myself, and with that went on more forcefully.

"Herds of buffalo, bands of antelope fled as I approached them. Wolves and coyotes howled and shrilly yelped. A kit fox began following me and I was pleased, thinking it might be a sign of coming

24: Schultz F-3 (1877-1947) 1980 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

787 777 825 721 154

good luck. I turned about and stopped. It stopped, sat on its haunches, and I spoke to it. '*Sinopah*,' I said, 'you, your whole kind are wise. When you are hungry you never fail to catch and kill food, birds and the various small animals; and you all are runners so swift that you always escape from your many enemies who try to kill you. *Sinopah*, pity me. Ask your far-back ancestors' shadows (spirits, souls), they who lived in that long-ago time when all of the various animals and men spoke together, to pity me, help me to be successful in my undertakings. Keep on following me, *Sinopah*, and I will do something for you. I shall presently kill an animal of some kind, and you shall have all that you can eat of it.'

"With that I went on, and seeing that *Sinopah* still followed me I was more than ever pleased. He is going to help me, give me of his power, I thought.

721 154 787 777 [805] [821]

"I felt stronger, walked faster, on and on along the rim of the plain, often looking up at the Seven Persons constantly turning in the northern sky. At last they gave me to know that the new day was near. The eastern sky began to whiten, then to redden. *Sinopah* was still following me. Oh, what a good-luck sign. *Haiya!* Just as Sun was coming up I heard a sudden tearing sound like that of a dead, loose-barked tree in fierce wind, and looking back, I saw a big eagle swoop down upon *Sinopah* and with one claw in the back of his neck, the other in his loin, rise and fly off with him, *Sinopah* shrilly crying. *Haiya! Haiya!* Even he, his kind, wise and swift though they were, had enemies still more wise and swift, big birds that seized and carried them off for food for their young. Gone my hope for help from *Sinopah*. Sad, feeling weak, I turned off the plain, sped down the long slope to Big River, and drank thirstily of its muddy water.

721 154

"I was hungry. My pemmican was for a time when I would be close to an enemy camp. Some whitetail deer came to the shore to drink. Should I shoot one, enemies somewhere about might hear the boom of my gun and come searching for me. But I must take that risk. I killed a yearling doe, built a fire, broiled and ate my fill of its meat, broiled more, enough to last several days, then crept into thick brush and slept until night came again.

"Again I took up onto the plain and traveled eastward, heading

A, [i.e., Ursa Major--Analyst]

Bison Skulls on Chief Mountain

of the butte as fast as I could go without making any noise, and in the lower edge of the timber forced my way into a thick growth of berry brush and sat down. I was sweating, breathing hard from my run. My heart was fast beating. For a long time I kept looking up at the way I had come, but the enemy did not appear, nor could I hear anything of them. Without doubt they did not know of my presence there on the butte. But for the excited, croaking ravens they would have come upon me, killed me as I slept. This, I felt, was a sign that my luck had turned, that my bad luck was ended. 'Oh, you Ravens,' I said. 'You saved me from those Parted Hairs. Give me of your power. Continue to help me. I will help you. Yes, I will leave always some of the meat of my killings for you and your raven kind to eat.'

"From Hairy Cap it had been my intention to go north to Little River and follow it down in quest of the camp of the Cutthroats. But now as I sat there on the slope of the butte I saw, well to the south from me, a herd of buffalo suddenly bunch up and then run swiftly toward the breaks of Big River. Soon appeared the cause of their flight: thirty or forty sitting-on-tops (horsemen) riding eastward, now at a trot, again at a lope—another homeward-bound war party, probably Cutthroats. I decided that, come night, I would take to their trail.

"I did so and three mornings later, from the edge of a grove on Big River, I discovered the enemy camp. It was in a big, open bottom where Little River joins Big River; and its three hundred and more lodges were set in a circle just above the mouth of Little River. *Ha!* At last I had come upon that which I sought. I was glad. Sun was just rising and already the people were building their early fires and stirring about, men turning loose their fast buffalo horses to graze, women going for water, for wood, children running hither and thither and happily yelling. And out from the camp, all over the big bottom, band after band of horses were grazing. How easy, come night, for me to drive off many of them. But no. Those common ones I did not want. For me, only the fast, valuable ones that the hunters and warriors tied before their lodges for better safety during the night.

24: Schultz F-3 (1877-1947) 1980 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

103 Bird-Tail Butte: *Súatsi Istuki* ("Eagle-Tail Butte").

Black Butte: *Iswátoyis* ("Sweet Pine Butte against the Judith Mountains").

Black Leaf Creek: *Siksoyo Pokskwo* ("Black Leaf").

Blood Creek: *Ahkiks Ótsitótsipi* ("Where the Women Swam"). The story goes that the women of a party, while swimming in this stream, began to fight and their blood colored the water. White men saw the water and so called it "Blood Creek."

Blue River: *Natoyi Isisákta* ("Sun [Holy] River"). Along the banks of this stream were places where blue ocher was dug and used for paint.

Boulder River: *Ústaiyi Tuktai* ("Diving Creek"). This stream was so named because it zigzags swiftly down.

Box Elder: *Pahksípiskwi* ("Box Elder").

Buffalo Fall, nine miles above the town of Choteau: *Ahkaksuwachis Otsitotop* ("Many-Tail-Feathers Burned It"). This is the very last place that the Pikunis used a buffalo fall. For the story of Many-Tail-Feathers' burning of it, see Chapter 21 of this volume.

[778 [224 825] Buffalo Lake: *Ómuk Inískim* ("Big Buffalo Stone"). The buffalo stone was a joint of a fossil plant which was held sacred by the Indians. Its use was to charm the buffalo into coming near. Some years ago Mr. Richard Sanderville of Browning, Montana, found what was left of a camp on this lake. The tipi circle was there and the tipis had faced east. To the south of the door of one was a large stone to represent the rising sun. At the back of the tipi, directly opposite the door, was the buffalo stone. On the north side, traced in rocks, was the figure of a man lying down. Directly in the center was the fireplace. On the north side of the fireplace, set in a semicircle, were the horns of seven buffalo bulls; back of them in a semicircle also were the bones of the forelegs of eight buffalo cows. In the same manner on the south side of the fireplace were the horns of eight buffalo cows; and in back of them, the bones of the forelegs of seven buffalo bulls. This camp was there many, many years ago. The buffalo stone found there was last in the possession of Mr. Sanderville, who intended to give it to the Museum of the Plains Indian at Browning.

Bull Mountains: *Istúmik Istukiks* ("Snake's Nose"). At the west end of this range of mountains is a ledge of rocks that the Pikunis called the "Snake's Nose."

Butte: *Nitúmo* ("A Butte").

Bynum Reservoir: *Nitókitsi* ("Grove in Sight").

Often, he wore a disguise that consisted of a buffalo robe and head mask; thus costumed, he would act as a decoy. At other times, he would be disguised as an antelope. 224

Traditions about some of the more renowned runners have come down among the Blackfeet. Perhaps the most skilled known to us was Red Antelope. He seems to have been an actual individual who lived probably about the time of the introduction of the horse, i.e., ca. A.D. 1760. An indication of when he lived is provided by the text of some songs that have been handed down. His spiritual powers as a runner were derived from the antelope and the falcon. His shirt and leggings were made of antelope hide and decorated with red ochre. In addition, he wore a disguise made from the head of an antelope, and he carried rattles made of antelope hooves. Red Antelope took particular care of his outfit, rolling it up with sweetgrass after use and depositing it in a secret place some distance away to avoid contamination by camp odors. Here again, we have an emphasis upon human odor-free conditions. His paraphernalia descended among members of the Small Robes band, and his rattles are said to have disappeared only recently. Some of the elements enumerated above are reminiscent of Shoshoni practices. The Blackfeet drive complex may, in fact, have been influenced by certain traits from the Great Basin. 173 224 [175] [825] [292] [237] [293] [824] [827] [171]

We can return once more to the runner we left earlier at the gathering area. The gathering area often included a lake at which bison were accustomed to drink. Back at camp, dogs had been muzzled and tied up so that they would not alarm the herd during the crucial period to follow. Sometimes, it was said, a dog was restrained by tying it to a block of wood. (Archaeologists coming across a piece of tree trunk for which they cannot account, might consider it in this context.) Dogs at that time, we must remember, were an important part of Blackfeet life, inasmuch as they were the beasts of burden. Later, of course, the horse would be introduced to displace dogs in this capacity. 224 224 231 231 492

The runner's task was to locate a herd, start it up, and put it into motion toward the drive lane. If bison were plentiful, the first part was relatively easy. If not, it might be necessary for the runner to continue for a considerable distance. Thereafter, the second 224

[p. 246-A]

778 [648] only one example exists among the Blackfeet, as the other was captured years ago by the Flatheads, and whether it has been preserved in that tribe is not known.

787 778 Northern Chief went out one day in the hope of having a vision, and was successful in his quest. In the dream a person appeared and told Northern Chief that he would give him a pipe, warning him, however, to be careful never to allow the pipe to touch the earth nor to permit any woman to touch it. The outer wrapper of the pipe bundle was of albino wolf-skin, while the inner one was black. Northern Chief learned the songs belonging to the bundle, and in his dream it was given to him to carry home. On his way he stopped to drink at a spring and thoughtlessly laid the pipe on the ground. His thirst quenched, he turned to pick up the pipe only to find that it had become a piece of rotten wood. He then awoke.

When Northern Chief returned home he made a pipe exactly like the one seen in the vision. He had been instructed that his pipe should belong only to brave warriors, preferably young and unmarried. The pipe always gave success in war and was used in the capture of the horses of the enemy. When on the warpath the bundle was unwrapped, and if a spider should chance to fall

726 778 [825] [787]

32: Wildschut E-5 (1923) 1928
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Piegan
Montana

out of it, this was regarded as an omen of success. If, on the warpath, anyone requested the

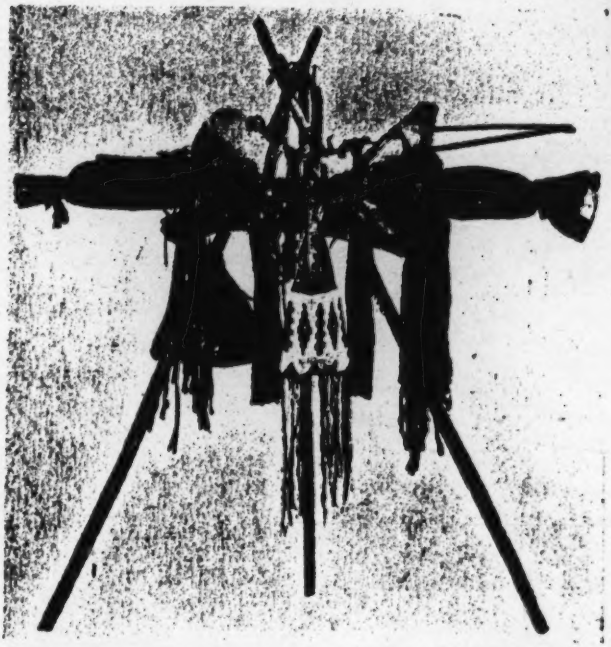

FIG. 103.—Catchers Society pipe bundle of the Blackfeet on its tripod. Length of bundle, 50 in.; of the tripod, 82 in. (12/512)

loan of the bundle, the owner painted the borrower and gave him some feathers belonging to the pipe.

37: Ewers E,G-4,5 (1941-1944) 1972 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

532 342 were snake-painted tipis among three of the four major divisions of the Blackfoot – the South Piegan (in Montana), and the North Piegan and Blood (in Canada), while the North Blackfoot had a Big Snake (rattlesnake) tipi. He also described one of these tipis (Wissler 1912: 220-22, 337-38).

[123] Ninety-five years after the unnamed Blackfoot artist pictured a snake-painted tipi, I saw one of them, then owned by Yellow Kidney and his wife, in the sun dance encampment near Browning. The snakes' heads were painted red, and their bodies were alternating blocks of red and green, zig-zagging around the tipi cover against a white background – much as they are pictured by the Blackfoot artist in 1847. The bottom portion of the tipi cover was also painted red with white discs, and three horizontal red bands were painted at the top of the white background of the central portion – as in the earlier artist's rendering. The upper portion (representing the night sky) was painted black, although the small discs within that area (representing stars) were green on the Yellow Kidney tipi, [178] whereas they are white in the artist's version of the snake-painted tipi. It is significant that the design of this painted tipi changed very little over a period of a century, during which it must have been repainted many times on new lodge covers of buffalo cow skin and more recently of white cloth, or canvas.

532 776 The crescent-shaped moon (in black) and circular sun (orange) appearing in the left center of the artist's work must be intended to show that Sun and Moon were major supernaturals recognized by the Blackfoot. In the tribal mythology 821 Moon is considered to be Sun's wife, and Morning Star was their son. This [773] relationship is repeatedly referred to in such well-known Blackfoot myths as [796] Scar Face, and The Fixed Star (or The Woman Who Married a Star) – myths [178] which account for the origin of the sun dance, and the symbolism of the sacred digging stick carried by the medicine woman in that most important tribal religious ceremony (Wissler and Duvall 1908: 58-68). On some of the dry-painting altars employed in Blackfoot ceremonies the moon is represented in black paint as in the artist's drawing. But on the sun dance altar it is yellow, with a narrow black center. It is always portrayed as a crescent (Wissler 1912: 254-57).

532 • 825 [776] This leaves only the small panel at the bottom left of the plate to be interpreted. Perhaps the artist chose to picture the pair of antelopes as a further indication of the variety of sources of supernatural power known to the Blackfoot. The antelope might, of course, have been the artist's own supernatural helper. The Blackfoot knew the antelope as the swiftest of the larger mammals on the plains. Antelope power provided a war medicine. [526] [575] Contenders in the foot races between members of the different men's societies during the summer sun dance encampments also wanted antelope power to enhance their swiftness afoot.

178 [123] [797] [144] I was privileged to live among the Blackfoot Indians in Montana for three and one-half years (1941-1944) nearly a century after Father Point first brought the teachings of Christianity to those Indians. Blackfoot life and culture had changed markedly during the intervening years. By the early 1940s less than 20%

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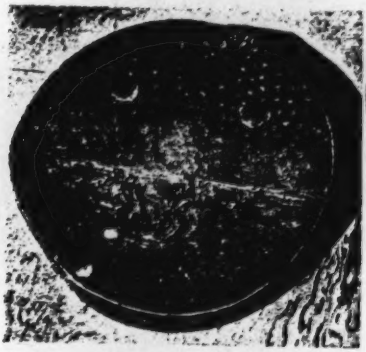

14. Painted ceremonial drum.

stars. They were symbolic medicine paintings intended to protect the shield owner in war. An old Blackfeet shield bearing a single crude painting of a buffalo in red is shown in figure 13. As was customary, a fringe of eagle feathers surrounds the rawhide body of the shield. Symbolic paintings were also made on the heads of drums used in ceremonials, such as the drum from a medicine pipe bundle bearing the claws of the thunder bird and dots symbolizing hail shown in figure 14. Horse and deer hides were preferred for drum heads.

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Painting on Soft Skins

Women also painted geometric patterns on the soft tanned inner surfaces of buffalo robes. Generally the robes were spread out on the ground, hair side down. Some women used one or the other of the two methods of applying the paint to robes explained in our description of parfleche painting, while others employed a third method. The outlines of the painted forms were pressed firmly into the soft surface of the hide with a flattened stick marking tool, drawn along the edge of a willow stick ruler. Then the bone paint brushes were used to paint in the designs with a mixture of paint, water, and glue from the second scrapings of a hide.

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At one time Blackfeet women may have painted other geometric patterns on buffalo

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[P. 20-A]

from two to four pairs of them are depicted. The figures face east. 531 532

These animal figures generally are very stylized and decorative. Usually the body is of one solid color, either black, red or yellow. A characteristic elaborative device on most of them is the representation of the throat, heart and kidneys, which were believed to have been the sources of power of the animals depicted. [776] [825]

Many lodges decorated with animal paintings, and a number of others not so decorated, employ a similar composition of the upper and lower portions of the cover into two fields for geometric painting. At the bottom, a banded area two or more feet in height usually is painted red to represent the earth. Within this red area are one or two rows of unpainted disks representing fallen stars. A row of triangular or rounded projections upward from this band appears on a number of lodge covers, representing rounded hills or sharp mountain peaks. A banded area at the top of the cover, including the projecting ears, generally is painted black to represent the night sky. Two arrangements of unpainted disks within this area, one on each ear flap, represent the constellations of the Great Bear and the Pleiades. A Maltese cross on the west side of this top area is said to represent the morning star, or butterfly, believed to bring powerful dreams to the lodge owner. 821 531 532

In the old days only a small proportion 531 121

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23. Figures on the south side of an otter painted lodge, 1943

[P.27-A]

41: Ewers E,G-4,5 (1941-1944) 1945
NF6 Blackfoot NF6

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24. Yellow buffalo painted lodge in 1943.

of the total number of lodges in a camp were painted, and some of the painted ones employed symbols of power other than animal figures. However, from the point of view of aesthetic interest, the lodges painted with animal figures are outstanding. Their great size, and their simple, primitive, decorative quality command attention and admiration. It is in the painted animal figures on lodge covers that we find the finest expression of Blackfeet religious art. Certainly they represent the highest achievement of traditional Blackfeet painting. 531 121

QUILLWORK

The Blackfeet Indians have a beautiful legend explaining how the first porcupines were given to one of their ancestors by the powerful Thunder spirit. The same legend states that Thunder taught this person how to do quillwork. This is said to have happened a very long time ago. Certainly porcupine quillwork is one of the Blackfeet decorative arts that originated before these Indians 237 [773] 776 [825] 531

[P. 27-B]

539 721 Runner's party crept close to the camp in an attempt to identify the people by their language, but they could hear nothing, so at dawn they attacked the camp.

One of the Piegans camped with Big Plume's party was named Onistáiyey [Calf Robe]. Calf Robe and Machkúyeemachsin [West Wolf] and my father were all the same age, and they were all good friends. But during the attack, while Calf Robe was jumping over a log to take cover, West Wolf, his own partner, shot him through the ribs. West Wolf shouted, [553] "My name is Woman's Moccasin" [it was common practice for a Plains Indian to take a new name on the occasion of scoring a coup against the enemy], but when the mistake had been discovered, West Wolf denied having fired the shot that wounded his friend.

When the two groups of Piegans recognized one another they stopped fighting, and they all did what they could for the wounded Calf Robe. They could not take him with them on the war party, so they doctored him and prepared a shelter for him and left him there to get better. Before they left, they [415] prepared a quantity of dry meat for him and gave him four or five buffalo paunches filled with water; they also left him several stalks of wild rhubarb, which he used as drinking straws. Finally they cut plenty of firewood for him and also left him a large amount of *inístan* [buffalo chips]. Buffalo chips burn [372] slowly and leave little ash, and he used these to keep his fire [237] going all night so that the wild animals would not enter his shelter. They also left him a dry stick with a crook in the end, and this he used in pulling the firewood inside the tent. [The word for the dry stick with a crook in it is *ahpahtohkahnikseh*, and Jim and I both had to wrestle with the translation.]

539 After a few days, when Calf Robe felt well enough to sit up, he heard a sound outside his shelter, and pulling aside the dark door he saw a coyote sitting there looking at him. So he talked [825] to the coyote as though it were a person. [The Blackfoots believed that a coyote had the power to understand human speech.] He asked the coyote to please help him, so the coyote entered the shelter and licked Calf Robe's wounds and stayed with him and doctored him every day.

Finally, when Calf Robe had recovered sufficiently so that he could get about for short periods by leaning on a cane, he heard something coming toward his shelter. The coyote heard the sound too, and the coyote ran away in fear, so Calf Robe de-

54: Lancaster F-3(1958-1966)1966 NF6 Blackfoot NF6
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122 rather unsteadily back into the house he said, "I ate some onions in town for lunch. Every time I ate onions I gets sick." Then he said, in a single unpunctuated sentence: "I been sick before eating those onions and if I get sick again well whose fault is it it's mine."

Jim pluckily carried on with his translation of the Chief's stories, though, and I was thankful that he did because the results were
224 outstanding. Many so-called "experts" and "authorities" on the Black-
439 foot culture have voiced the incredibly off-base conclusion that because the Blackfoots never brought more than an occasional few beaver pelts into the trading posts, the Blackfoots were not good trappers. The fact is that the small water-dwelling animals (the "Un-
[825] derwater Persons," of which the "Beaver Persons" were the leaders) were nearly as important in Blackfoot religious life as was the Sun. On occasion the Blackfoots would take the pelt of an Underwater Person for employment in religious ritual, but they did not trap beaver on a commercial basis, and those beaver pelts that were brought in by the Blackfoots for purposes of trade with the White Man invariably had been captured from White trappers or from the Crees or from other tribes that had no religious prohibitions with regard to trapping the Underwater Persons. It is easy to understand, then, why the Blackfoots raised so much hell with trappers, White or Indian, who invaded Blackfoot territory.

121 To my best knowledge, the Blackfoots were the only Plains In-
825 dians who placed so much credence in the existence of underwater
796 spirits, and I have my own theories on this subject. All of the
171 Algonkin Indians, including the Blackfoots, are known to have lived at one time in the Northeastern region of North America, and it is generally believed that the Blackfoots were the first of the Algonkin groups to take up residence in the Northwest. And I personally believe that the Blackfoot Underwater Persons are a religious inheritance from early Eastern Woods Indian culture. (The Cheyennes also believe in underwater spirits, and the Cheyennes, like the Blackfoots, are of Algonkin origin.) I have long observed a Norse influence upon Algonkin culture, and this observation is fortified with regard to the Blackfoots by the Blackfoot belief in not only the Underwater Persons (the water animals, the water birds, and in some instances even frogs, turtles and lizards) but in disembodied underwater spirits which appear to the Blackfoots in visions in the form of human beings *with blond hair and blue eyes.*

It is quite logical that since the Blackfoots departed from the East Coast at such an early time (they lived for some generations, it is believed, in the region of the Great Slave Lake) that early Algonkin

54: Lancaster F-3(1958-1966)1966 NF6 Blackfoot NF6
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culture should have been retained by the isolated Blackfoots in a form more pure than that found among those Algonkins who remained in the East and were thus subjected to the cultural influence of other Indian groups and of course to that of the various European groups which colonized in that area. I am especially intrigued by the fact that even today some of the older Blackfoots, when crossing a body of water, will offer gifts to the spirits upon whose domain they are trespassing. Usually the offering to the Underwater Spirits is in the form of tobacco—a sack of Bull Durham or a cigarette—but this gesture certainly evokes thoughts of the ancient mariners (not only the Norsemen but the Ancient Greeks) pouring libations upon the waters in petition for a safe voyage. Even today, the Underwater Spirits are very real to those Blackfoots who cling to the old beliefs, and although some of the younger Blackfoots do not hesitate to trap the Beaver Persons and the Otter Persons, the old-timers still prefer to purchase their ceremonial water-animal skins from the barbaric Crees.

There is certainly a great deal of factual information with which to link Blackfoot culture to that of the ancient Norsemen (e.g., the Blackfoot sweat lodge is identical in appearance and function to the rustic Scandinavian sauna bath, and the Blackfoots switch themselves with a buffalo tail exactly as the Scandinavians smack themselves with birch branches), but our best clues as to the origin of the Blackfoots exist probably in Blackfoot legend. Tonight, after we had discussed the Underwater Persons, the Chief told me a richly interesting history of an event which had taken place "a long time ago" (when the Chief says a long time ago he means a *really* long time ago) when all the Blackfoots lived "far to the north." This legend may imply, among other things, the first breaking away of the Piegans from the main body of Blackfoots. The hero of the story is a man called Round Scabby Robe, who received his power from the Underwater Persons, the Beaver Persons. The word "Piegan"—which most writers transcribe from the Blackfoot as "Pekuni" or "Pecunnie" but which is correctly pronounced either [pikə́ni] or [pikə́ʔni] according to linguistic environment—means Scabby Robe.

WHY THE PIEGANS KILL THE SNAKE PERSONS

A long, long time ago, when all the Blackfoots lived far up in the North, they did not kill the Snake Persons [the Shoshoni Indians] or make war on them. Each year when the waters became warm [probably in July or early August], the chiefs

539 of the Blackfoots and the chiefs of the Snake Persons would
648 meet at the Big River. [The Chief used the term, *Ó-mach-k'tai:*
[103] Big River, and since this is the Blackfoot name for the Missouri River, I believe that the reference was to the Missouri and not to the body of water located west of the Rockies which is today known as Big River.] When they met in the water of the
[555] *Ó-mach-k'tai*, the chiefs of the two nations would count coup by touching each other lightly with their lances. Each time they touched one another they would shout their coups back to their own camps, and that night each camp would have a victory celebration as though there had been a real battle instead of just a friendly ceremony. The next day, the two nations would exchange gifts, and then each would go its separate way, singing.

539 It was customary in those days that when the Blackfoots had
[291] a dance each girl should dress in the manner of her husband or sweetheart; in this way, everybody could tell whose woman
[554] she was. The men displayed their war honors by decorating their belongings with the white winter skin of the weasel [the
[825] Blackfoots believed the weasel to be the most courageous of all wild animals], and by wearing in their hair the feathers of
[301] the hawk and of the eagle. But since it was not proper for a woman to wear feathers, the Blackfoot ladies attended the dances with their hair decorated instead with braids of *ah-pu-tú-yis* [white grass].

There was at this time among the Blackfoots a young man known as Ah-pi-koh-koh-mi-nim-mah: Round Scabby Robe. Round Scabby Robe was pretty much the camp buffoon; he was not a good hunter, he had no war honors, and his only robe was a scabby old hide which he had cut into the shape of a circle. Round Scabby Robe was too poor to take a wife, but he was secretly in love with the youngest wife—the "far-away" wife—of the head chief, and she in turn was in love with Round Scabby Robe.

595 [Although a Blackfoot man—especially if he were a chief—
539 might have several wives, his various spouses were not considered to share positions of equal privilege in his lodge. A definite hierarchy of both social prestige and household authority existed among the good ladies, top dog being the "sits-by-him," wife (so called because she was the one who sat nearest her husband at social and religious functions). Next in line was the "takes-care-of-him" wife, and so on down the ladder until

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we reach the poor gal who was required to perform the meanest labors of teepeekeeping and who was obliged to sleep next to the door and who for obvious reasons was known as the "far-away" wife. The far-away wife almost invariably was the baby sister of one (or more) of the other wives. Frequently she was a mere child and a wife in name only—more of a ward, really—and she was available for marriage to any young chap who could cough up the right price. If our friend Round Scabby Robe had had the hots for one of the head chief's top echelon wives, he would have been in hot water; however, as we shall see, his romance with the young far-away wife had a happy ending.] 595 539

No one in the camp was aware of the love between Round Scabby Robe and the chief's far-away wife until one night at a dance the girl appeared dressed in the manner of her lover. All the people began to gossip then, and when Round Scabby Robe saw his sweetheart dressed in a scabby old robe, with no braids of *ah-pu-tú-yis* in her hair, he felt so ashamed that he asked his partner to go with him down to Bull River, where the beaver lodges are. Then he told his partner good-bye and said that he was going to pass the winter in the lodges of the Beaver Persons. 539

When Round Scabby Robe entered the lodge of the Chief Beaver, the Chief Beaver, who is Chief of all the Underwater Persons, asked him why he had come there. He said that he had come to spend the seven moons of winter with the Beaver Persons, so the Chief Beaver made him welcome. 539 825

The Chief of the Beaver Persons gave Round Scabby Robe a shell formed like a plate. The shell contained seven berries, and the Chief Beaver said to eat the berries. So Round Scabby Robe ate the seven berries, and immediately there appeared upon the shell seven more berries. Each time the seven berries were consumed, seven more appeared.

Then the Chief Beaver gave Round Scabby Robe a drink of water in a large shell shaped like a drinking horn, but each time that Round Scabby Robe drained the shell of water it was immediately filled once again to the brim.

Then the Chief Beaver said, "You cannot eat all the berries because they represent the savis berries which grow all along the banks of the river, and there is no end of the savis berries. And you cannot drink all the water because it represents the water in this river, and the water flows unceasingly."

539 825 So Round Scabby Robe passed the seven moons of winter in the lodge of the Beaver Persons. He became good friends with everyone, but he grew especially fond of a small white beaver which was the youngest son of the Chief Beaver and which soon became his constant companion.

When springtime came and Round Scabby Robe was preparing to leave the Beaver Lodge, the small white beaver called him aside and whispered into his ear: "Do you see those medicine bundles over there? And do you see that small stick amongst them? Well, when you leave our lodge you must take that small stick with you. That small stick represents myself, and I have gotten used to you as a friend and so you must take me with you when you go. My father will offer you your choice of any of the medicine bundles and all the power that goes with it, but you must accept nothing but the small stick which represents myself and my power."

Sure enough, as Round Scabby Robe was preparing to leave, the Chief Beaver offered him his choice of any of the medicine bundles, and when Round Scabby Robe said that he wanted only the small stick, the Beaver Chief attempted to dissuade him from his choice. He said, "You cannot make use of that stick. I will give you other gifts instead." But Round Scabby Robe insisted that he desired only the small stick.

The Chief Beaver made a ceremony then, and sang three songs, and then he offered Round Scabby Robe a bundle which contained the pelt of an otter (*ém-moon-i-sey*). Round Scabby Robe refused the bundle, saying that he wished only the small stick. Three more times the Chief Beaver performed ceremonies and sang songs, and in turn he offered Round Scabby Robe bundles which contained the pelt of a beaver (*ksisk-stah-ki*), the skin of a loon (*máht-sey-i-sèy-pi-eh*), and the skin of a turtle (*spoo-pi*), but each time the bundle was refused. Round Scabby Robe spoke to the Chief Beaver: "I am honored that you offer me these medicine bundles and the great powers that they possess. But I am a simple man and I cannot accept such fine gifts. I can accept only the small stick."

The Chief Beaver said, "You have spoken well. And you have chosen well, for the small stick which you have chosen possesses the most powerful medicine of all. You shall have the stick, but first I shall teach you two songs which you must sing in order to evoke the power of the stick."

[533] The words of the first song were:

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> In the spring of the year we come out
> from our lodges, and if we see enemies,
> we dive back down beneath the water.

The words of the second song were:

> In the spring of the year we come out
> from our lodges, and if we see enemies,
> we do our best to save our lives.

Then the Chief Beaver said, "When you meet your enemies you must first sing these songs, and then you must chant four times, *yuh! yuh! yuh! yuh!*"

So the Chief Beaver gave Round Scabby Robe the small stick, but first he wrapped the stick in cattail leaves and admonished Round Scabby Robe never to place the stick upon the ground but always to place it on a buffalo chip. He said, "If ever the stick touches water or swampy ground it will immediately turn into a young beaver, so never allow the stick to become damp unless you wish to evoke the full power of the Beaver Medicine which the stick represents."

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Round Scabby Robe accepted the stick then, and as he was about to leave the lodge the small white beaver came and whispered once again into his ear. He said, "Soon you will have occasion to use the power of the stick. When next the Blackfoots and the Snake Persons meet at the water of *Ó-mach-k'tai*, Big Top, Chief of the Snake Persons, while pretending to touch the Blackfoot Chief with his lance, will treacherously attempt to kill him instead. You must save your chief by meeting Big Top in the water and fighting him. Sing your medicine songs, and tie the small stick across your chest, and then Big Top will not be able to harm you because my power is too strong for him. Big Top will be wearing his hair in two braids, and at the front of his head he will have a large topknot decorated on the one side with white shells and on the other with black shells. After you have killed him, you should take his scalp. If you do these things, you will become a great warrior and a chief."

So Round Scabby Robe returned to his people, and he told his plans to his partner. He said, "Partner, Big Top is going to try to kill our chief, but I am going to save our chief's life by meeting Big Top in the water and fighting him. After I have killed him I will take his scalp, and since you are my partner I will share the scalp with you. Some of our other warriors will